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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1904.

*Nature's Comedian.*¹

BY W. E. NORRIS.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DEFINITELY PLACED.

HAROLD, as he sauntered across the fields in the direction of the Rectory, after his unequivocal dismissal by Lilian, laughed softly once or twice; for indeed he did not regard himself as having been unequivocally dismissed.

'Not stupid,' he murmured, echoing her last words; 'no, I don't think I am exactly stupid, although I seem, somehow or other, to be always doing rather stupid things. It was stupid to drive her into a corner like that and remind her that she did love me some months ago; but it was wise—indispensable even—to acknowledge that I had made Miss Josephine an offer. Of course she wasn't pleased—how could she be?—but I shouldn't wonder if she understood, all the same. For, after all, she isn't stupid either.'

His own stupidity and lack of comprehension were not without excuse. For so many years he had been falling a little in love with women who for the most part had fallen a good deal in love with him; his whole experience (save in the solitary instance of Josephine Gardiner) had so uniformly led him to assume that the last word would always be his that he could not believe in a phenomenon so strange as Lilian's having ceased to

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care for him. He was not conceited ; he knew very well that he was not worth much, and upon his good looks, of which he was necessarily aware, he set no higher value than it is human and natural to ascribe to a birthright beyond dispute ; yet rejection, now that he himself was at last thoroughly in earnest, was to him a thing barely conceivable. He forgot, perhaps, that he had been in earnest when he had offered to throw up his profession at Miss Gardiner's bidding ; he forgot, or did not realise, that he was for ever being in earnest and that his earnestness was never of long duration. What had happened to him, he thought, was merely that he had met with a check which might well have been foreseen ; he would run down again in a few weeks' time and atone for his present somewhat over-confident precipitation.

Anne had gone out when he returned to the Rectory ; so he spent a quiet, solitary afternoon, smoking many cigarettes and enjoying complete idleness as only those can whose waking hours are ordinarily full of occupation to the brim. Not until five o'clock, by which time he was beginning to wonder languidly what had become of everybody, did Dick come hurrying in, with apologies almost too profuse and contrite for the occasion.

'My dear fellow, I am more ashamed of myself than I can say ! What a way to reward you for sparing us one day out of your busy life ! But first of all, as I daresay Anne will have told you, Lady Gardiner unexpectedly turned up in church and insisted upon carrying me off to lunch with her, and then—then other things occurred. In short, it has been a—a most unusual day. If anybody had told me when I got up this morning what it was going to bring, I should have set him down as a raving lunatic—I should indeed !'

Harold surveyed his elder brother with amused curiosity and—oddly enough—without any suspicion of the truth, although he at once perceived that Dick and Lilian must have met.

'Why, what have you been up to ?' he asked. 'You look as if you weren't sure whether you were standing on your head or your heels.'

'Then,' answered Dick, laughing in a sheepish, deprecating fashion, 'all I can say is that my looks don't belie me.'

His looks might surely have betrayed him, since his grey eyes had a peculiar light in them which has but one meaning and which is visible in the eyes of mortal man on certain occasions only. But there was more in his eyes and in his heart than the joy and triumph of victory ; for he had before him the unpleasant

task of announcing his victory to a discomfited rival, and how to accomplish this with any sort of delicacy or consideration he knew not. Perhaps he was well advised in abandoning circumlocution and saying straight out :

'You won't wonder at my strange appearance when I tell you of my extraordinary good fortune. Lilian Ormond and I are engaged to be married !'

Nobody could have been less on his guard than Harold against such a knock-down blow as this ; yet he took it without wincing.

'That,' he remarked composedly, 'is indeed a piece of good fortune. I hope you won't think me rude for agreeing with you that it is rather an extraordinary one. Unexpected, at all events, by me ; though I congratulate you none the less sincerely on that account.'

His first and not unnatural impression was that Lilian had done this thing, as women sometimes will, out of sheer perversity and for the pleasure of cutting off her nose to spite her face. He believed that she loved him ; he did not believe that she loved poor old Dick, whose elation he found both pathetic and ludicrous, nor did he believe that the engagement so abruptly entered into would ever lead to a marriage. But he was compelled to modify that consoling view of the case when his brother, drawing nearer to him and laying a hand on his shoulder, said :

'Harold, old chap, we must have it out together ; otherwise I sha'n't feel comfortable, nor, I should think, will you. Of course I know that you have cared for Lilian, and I must assume that you care still, since she tells me that you asked her to marry you this morning. She herself is persuaded that you don't ; but——'

'Oh, I care,' interpolated Harold, smiling.

Dick sighed. 'Yes, it stands to reason that you do, and I am more sorry about it than I can tell you. But what I want you to know—whether you will think that it makes things better or worse I can't tell, but it makes them decisive, anyhow—what I want you to know is that, even if I had been dead or otherwise disposed of, you would have had no chance with her. She assures me of that, and in all my experience of her I have never found her anything but strictly truthful. She doesn't deny that you had a chance at one time ; only you didn't take it. And in the nature of things, so she says, it couldn't possibly recur ; because——'

'Because of Miss Gardiner or because of my having brought out your play as my own ?'

'Not for either of those reasons; although she owns that they helped her to discover what she might not have discovered without help. It was a queer freak of destiny,' concluded Dick, with an embarrassed laugh, 'that made you and me competitors, and a queerer one still that has made me the winner; but—there's the fact! I have her own word for it, and she wouldn't say what was untrue. I only wish I could think, as she does, that—that——'

'What does she think, I wonder? That I shall be very easily consoled? Well,' said Harold, getting up and stretching himself, 'she is quite right. I am always easily consoled; I don't know anybody who is more blessed in that respect than I am, and I heartily wish you and her joy. You are excellent people both of you; so you ought to step well together; whereas it doesn't seem altogether unlikely that I, who am not excellent, might have got out of step before long. Let it be agreed that what is right, and let us shake hands all round.'

This method of carrying matters off, which Dick thought so generous that it moved him almost to tears, came without much difficulty to Harold, whose instincts led him to play an awkward part with such grace as circumstances would allow; but he was nevertheless profoundly hurt and mortified. It had been mortifying to be refused even by Josephine Gardiner, whom he had half wished to refuse him; it was ten times more so to be convinced, as he now was, that he had lost—if, indeed, he had ever in reality won—Lilian's love. After all, then, he was not irresistible! There were women, it appeared, who could do very well without him; and on a sudden it flashed across him, as a sort of whimsical revelation, how very ill able he was to do without them. They had bored him, they had irritated him, they had amused him; but they had always more or less understood him and had always spoiled him. And so, somehow or other, they had managed to render themselves indispensable. He could not, for instance, in his present sore plight go to Shepherd or to any other male friend and ask for that sort of sympathy which no male mortal has it in his power to bestow. It was the feminine element in the abstract that his tastes and nature craved, not any one woman in particular.

His sister Anne proved a somewhat inadequate representative of feminine perceptivity that evening, although she was as kind and compassionate as she knew how to be. Anne, to whom Dick's great news was a source of unmixed satisfaction, could hardly be expected to weep over the dislocation of her younger

brother's nose; yet she had some amicable and would-be consolatory words for Harold, which the Rector's enforced absence at evensong enabled her to address to him.

'Cheer up!' said she; 'things might have been ever so much worse. You might have been—upon my word, I half wonder that you aren't!—betrothed to Josephine Gardiner. Just think of that! And do you know, Harold, if you were engaged to Lil Ormond I should be almost as sorry for you as I should be for her. She is a dear, good girl, and she will make an admirable wife for Dick; but she would never have done for you. Not nearly broad-minded enough to tolerate your little ways of going on. Added to which, you would have wearied of her in six months.'

'Should I?'

'Well, in a year, then. I don't say that you won't regret her for more than a year; that, of course, is quite another affair. But regrets won't do you any harm, and success in this rather half-hearted courtship of yours wouldn't, you may take my word for it, have done you any good.'

'I take your word for no such thing,' answered Harold; 'you can't know much about it if you think that I have been half-hearted.'

'I know enough about it and you and her,' retorted Anne, 'to know that you are both of you well out of it. All the same, I believe you are fond of her in your way, and I see that you are feeling pretty dejected just now, and I give you all the credit you deserve for putting a good face upon things before Dick. You mustn't quarrel with me if I rejoice with him more than I can condole with you; for Dick, you see, is always desperately in earnest about everything, whereas you, if you'll pardon my saying so, are never quite in earnest about anything.'

That appreciation might be a correct one, but it fell rather short of being soothing, and Harold wanted very badly to be soothed. No doubt that was why he despatched a telegram to Lorna Fitzwalter before leaving for London the next morning, and followed this up by a visit to her early in the afternoon. He found her, as it chanced, looking her best; for the excitement and curiosity engendered by his heralded arrival had brought some tinge of pink into her usually sallow cheeks, and it may be also that she had taken pains to render herself attractive. She had, at any rate, arrayed herself in a very becoming fawn-coloured costume of some soft material, and her little drawing-room was

gay with the flowers of spring, while the appearance of its mistress in the subdued light contrived by lowered blinds was less suggestive of autumn than was sometimes the case. There was no denying, Harold thought, that Lorna was still an extremely handsome woman.

She was also an extremely kind-hearted and forgiving one. He could not but acknowledge that, with a pang of compunction, when she received unflinchingly and unfrowningly his somewhat brutal reply to her natural, irrepressible query.

'I've come,' was his announcement, 'because you seem to be the only woman who will have anything to say to me, and because I can't stand being left altogether out in the cold. What do you think of my having made two formal bids for matrimony during the last week, with the result that I have been twice declined?'

'I think,' she declared, 'that there are two women in the world who don't deserve to get what they have lost and who wouldn't have been worth winning if they had been won. You needn't tell me who they are, because of course I know, and I think I know why you proposed to them too. In different ways they both invited you to do it, and you wouldn't have been yourself if you had neglected to take up an invitation of that sort. All the same, I don't believe you are really disappointed. In spite of her money, you never can have wanted to marry Miss Gardiner, who never meant to marry you; and as for Miss Ormond——'

'What about Miss Ormond?' Harold asked, when she came to a pause.

'To give her her due, Miss Ormond is pretty. So are hundreds and thousands of other girls. You know her better than I do, but she gave me the impression of being quite ignorant of the world and its ways, and I should say that, as a wife, she would be exacting, obstinate, and difficult to live with.'

Harold nodded. 'That may be so,' he agreed.

'You know it is so, and you are not as inconsolable as you wish to appear. You have been inconsolable several times before, haven't you, Harold?'

'Have I? Well, perhaps. And I always come to you to be consoled.'

'I hope you always will,' she returned, smiling, 'and I hope you will never come in vain.'

'Ah, you have such inexhaustible patience!'

'I am bound to be patient,' said Lorna, with a touch of pathos; 'I should have seen the last of you long ago if I hadn't been. It is something, after all, that you do come to me when other people fail you. It shows—I wonder what it shows!'

'Oh, it shows more things than one, I expect,' answered Harold, with a laugh. 'I am most awfully fond of that girl, you know,' he added somewhat irrelevantly. 'And she is going to marry my brother, of all men in the world!'

'Does that really surprise you, after the little scene that she made at your supper-party? Sometimes you strike me as wonderfully simple, Harold; although I must confess that there are times when I could wish you less complicated. Still, as you say, you do end by coming back to me.'

'And by being welcomed, Heaven forgive me! It's too absurd!'

'What is absurd?' asked Miss Fitzwalter a little anxiously; for indeed the poor woman could not but be aware of her own absurdity. But his answer reassured her.

'My infidelity, my ingratitude, my shilly-shallying—my whole life and conduct, in short! Why don't you take permanent possession of me, Lorna, and put an end to it all?'

And, as she stared at him with dilated eyes of interrogation and incredulity, he went on: 'Oh, I mean it; I realise that Destiny or Providence, or whatever the force may be that doesn't make mistakes, has always meant it. I don't even apologise for having strayed away so often; Destiny or Providence, which made me what I am, must be saddled with the responsibility for that also. If you'll take me as I am, Lorna—and nobody knows better than you what I am, for even when I don't tell you my secrets you guess them—if you'll take me as I am, I'll try to behave decently. You'll be jealous at times,' Harold continued pensively; 'one foresees that; yet the odds are that you won't have as much cause for jealousy as most wives. I'm no longer as young as I was, you see, and I feel more and more every day that I am happier on the stage than in the world. When once we are married, I shall develop into a very domestic sort of person off the stage, I fancy.'

That he should thus coolly take her assent as a foregone conclusion did not offend Lorna, nor did she appear to object to an offer which came almost in the same breath with an avowal that he was 'most awfully fond' of somebody else. To tell the truth about her, she had been fed upon chance scraps for so

long that a whole bone, even if somewhat unceremoniously bestowed, was a gift which well nigh overwhelmed her with joy and gratitude.

'If only I could be sure that you wouldn't repent!' she murmured.

The one thing of which any woman rash enough to couple her future with Harold's might feel quite sure was that he would repent of the arrangement; but although, in a general way of speaking, he was well aware of this, his heart did not in the present crucial juncture misgive him. He was touched by Lorna's humility, he remembered her long forbearance and her repeated acts of generosity; it seemed to him that she had fairly earned the reward that she coveted, small though its intrinsic value might be. Moreover, she was, as has been mentioned, looking handsome that afternoon, and he had been all but enamoured of her once upon a time, and she remained, when all was said, the only woman who could be relied upon to stick to him through thick and thin. So he laughed and held out both his hands to her saying:

'Don't be afraid with any amazement, Lorna; I'm going to be good for the future. And even if I were going to be bad, your forgiveness, upon which I should count in advance, would always preserve me from the risk of repentance.'

'There's something in that,' she agreed, echoing his laugh, though the tears rose to her eyes at the same moment. 'And indeed I'm old enough,' she added, with an apparent inconsequence which did not obscure the very natural thought that was in her mind.

The betrothal of Mr. Dunville to the leading lady of his company was made known at the theatre, that same evening, immediately after the performance of *Renunciation*, and hearty were the felicitations addressed to the affianced pair by their fellow-artists. Actors and actresses are of all mortals the most unsophisticated. Turning night into day, as their avocations compel them to do, and, as a natural consequence, seeing wonderfully little of the outer world when off duty, they are, as a rule, quite willing to take it for granted that people who marry do so for the simplest of reasons. That Miss Fitzwalter was by a good many years Harold Dunville's senior those who had long been associated with them both in a professional capacity could not but be aware; but that he was contemplating a misalliance was an aspect of the case which did not suggest itself to them.

Only Shepherd, whose horizon was a somewhat wider one, had some ado to mask the consternation that he felt.

'But, my dear Dunville—why?' he asked in a dismayed whisper, as soon as he was able to draw his patron aside.

'It would take hours to tell you,' answered Harold, smiling. 'That is, unless you'll accept an explanation which can be given in a few words. Because it's final; because it definitely places me. Will that do for you? It ought to do, considering that you are never tired of impressing upon me that my mission in life is to be a comedian—neither more nor less.'

'Your mission in public life, yes; but not in private life,' Shepherd objected. 'You have never been at home with the class into which you—so needlessly, it seems to me—propose to marry.'

'Haven't I? You disappoint me, Shepherd. I thought I had been a good enough comedian to give them a different impression. I haven't, I am afraid, been quite good enough to convey the impression I should have liked to convey in other quarters; but that's all over and done with now, and the inhabitants of those quarters have my full permission to imitate me by disposing of themselves as they may think fit.'

He was not insincere in so saying; yet it must be confessed that his equanimity was a trifle disturbed when he read in the columns of the *Morning Post*, the next day, that a marriage had been arranged and would shortly take place between Captain Desborough, the recently elected member of the House of Commons who had forsaken the Navy for politics, and Josephine, only daughter and heiress of Sir Joseph Gardiner, M.P., of Grosvenor Place and Dunville Manor, Kent.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A BRILLIANT EXIT.

HAROLD said to himself that he didn't care—and that, of course, is what no mortal ever says to himself unless he does care. Upon a further analysis of his feelings, which would have been superfluous had he been genuinely indifferent, he went so far as to acknowledge that he deplored the substitution of a coming line of Desboroughs for the ancient family which had given its name to

Dunville Manor, although the oddity of Miss Gardiner's choice was no affair of his. There were perhaps other things which, as the days passed on, he inevitably deplored; but this he really could not afford to acknowledge. The die was cast; with his eyes open he had accepted what he had accepted, and if the affectionate, devoted, unselfish Lorna was not quite a lady—well, he had never at any time imagined that she was. What nonsense, after all, it is to doubt the self-evident fact that all human beings are made of the same clay, and how silly to be vexed by trifling solecisms on the part of those whose forefathers do not happen to have been for a certain number of generations well fed, well clothed, and well educated! For the matter of that, did anybody know who Sir Joseph Gardiner's grandfather had been?

That Sir Joseph Gardiner's daughter could boast of good blood on the maternal side was a circumstance more perceptible in her physical aspect than in her manners, which were never urbane or distinguished for delicacy. Harold, chancing upon her one afternoon in Bond Street, as she was crossing the pavement from a shop-door to her carriage, thought it rather ill-bred of her to tap him upon the shoulder with her sunshade, burst out laughing, and say:

'So you have actually taken my advice, I hear! I congratulate myself and you.'

'Thank you very much,' he answered, 'I am delighted to have this opportunity of returning the compliment and congratulating you. Not upon having settled my insignificant future—for I can't say that your advice has had much to do with that—but upon having determined your own. I am sure it will be a bright and conspicuous one. Do you become a Conservative now, may I ask, or does Desborough become a Radical?'

She laughed again. 'Oh, I suppose I gravitate to his side. He couldn't come over to ours without vacating his seat, which would be out of the question. Besides, as I have often told you, it doesn't matter two straws nowadays; government by party is as dead as Queen Anne. Yes, I think we shall very likely be bright and conspicuous, as you say; I seem to see the elements of fame and distinction in a partnership of our sort. You and Miss Fitzwalter are, of course, already famous—in your way.'

'In a way which you are pleased to despise, but which suits us very fairly well.'

'It suits you both to perfection, and I think you will also find that you suit one another, your tastes being, after all, so similar. The atmosphere of the stage is a rather restricted atmosphere, to be sure; but one recognises that it is as the breath of your nostrils to you, and naturally it must be so to her. You ought to get on all right when once you have grown accustomed to the other restrictions which matrimony more or less entails.'

She had her foot on the step of the carriage. 'Can I put you down anywhere?' she asked.

Harold declined the offer, took off his hat and walked on, feeling, it may be, that he had been sufficiently put down as it was. Miss Gardiner's air of patronage, her good-humoured impertinence, her significant omission to invite future visits on his part, all these were so many signs that he had lost caste, that a married actor is by no means the same person as a bachelor actor of good birth, and that he must no longer expect to mix as freely as of yore in circles where his wife was unlikely to be welcomed. Such, at least, was the interpretation which he—erroneously, perhaps—placed upon a reception which he chose to regard as typical. Once more, therefore, he was fain to protest inwardly that he didn't care. Had he ever in his life cared for smart society? Had the ostracism to which he had been condemned for a time in days gone by ever distressed him? The truth was that it had distressed him a good deal more than he knew, and that poor Lorna, by daily tricks of speech and demeanour of which she was wholly unconscious, distressed him now after a fashion unprecedented in their long previous intimacy. Oh, yes, he repented!—how could it be otherwise?

Nevertheless, he retained certain inherited instincts or principles, the mention of which may possibly serve to rehabilitate him a little in the esteem of impatient readers. Lorna was what she unavoidably was, and he ought to have remembered that when, in a moment of petulance, he had thrown himself into her arms; but since he had not remembered it, and since his word was pledged, the least that he could do now was to stick to her and stick up for her, should occasion arise. Occasions were not unlikely to arise, and indeed he had to wait no longer than another twenty-four hours for one of them to present itself in the shape of an unannounced visit from his sister Anne. Anne, who arrived in Ashley Gardens the next afternoon, with a concerned countenance, lost no time in stating the nature of her errand.

'My poor, dear Harold,' she began, 'this will never do! I suppose you may have thought it was dramatic, and so perhaps it is; but that doesn't make it practical or practicable, you know. If you have let yourself in for a breach of promise case I'm sorry; still, no price is too high to pay for liberty, and I should think you ought to be in funds just now. Anyhow, I have a balance at the bank, and you may count upon me to pull you through. In fact, if you'll leave it to me, I'll undertake to say matters shall be squared without ever coming into court. What is altogether inadmissible is that you should marry this woman and be dragged down to her level.'

Harold was a little touched and a good deal amused. 'The utter disdain of your sex for right and honour and justice in the abstract,' he remarked, 'is equalled only by your magnificent effrontery. I suppose that what you have it in your head to do is to descend upon my poor betrothed and, after pointing out in forcible language that she will be the shabbiest and most selfish of human beings if she doesn't let me off, to suggest that she should name her terms.'

The corners of Anne's mouth went down. 'Well,' said she, half in assent, half in interrogation.

'Well, it's magnificent of you, and, between ourselves, I shouldn't be in the least surprised at your gaining your object without the expenditure of a penny. The only thing against your success is that I don't want to be let off.'

'Oh, don't tell me that! You needn't tell me what made you behave in such a suicidal way either, because of course I know. You may imagine how distressed Dick is about it, and I am sure you can't imagine how little Lilian is distressed. I am extremely fond of Lilian, but she is, after all, a woman and in love. Don't you see that that makes her invulnerable and that you might marry your cook without causing her even a momentary pang?'

'Heaven forbid that I should cause any pangs either to her or to Lorna Fitzwalter, who happens also to be a woman and in love. At least, she assures me that she is in love, and I have every reason to believe her.'

Anne grunted. 'That may be; but unless she is a born idiot she can't fancy that you are in love with her. Come, Harold, the mischief isn't done yet, and really it mustn't be done! Consider what such a marriage would mean for you.'

'I've considered, thanks. It will mean that I shall be cut, or

at all events quietly dropped, by the majority of my friends. Even, I daresay, by you——'

'Oh, not by us,' Anne interjected; 'if the worst comes to the worst—but I hope and trust it won't—we shall have to put up with the woman. All the same, you will sink; for it isn't as though she were a great actress or as though you were a great man socially. You will simply become a couple whom people don't particularly care to know, that's all; and if entreaties or bribes can preserve you from that dreary lot, it isn't I who shall spare them.'

'How unscrupulous you are! And you a sort of parson in petticoats too!'

'I am your sister,' Anne returned resolutely. 'Maybe, if it comes to that, I am my mother's daughter into the bargain. Anyhow, I'm no believer in misalliances. Now, Harold, be a good fellow—in many respects you *are* a good fellow; I know it if nobody else does—and just honestly tell Miss Fitzwalter the whole truth. Or, if you won't do that, let me tell her.'

'My dear Anne,' said Harold, smiling, 'she knows the whole truth. She has always, strange as it may appear to you, known the whole truth about me, and she has always been true to me through it all, and that is one reason why I can't possibly be false to her now. She was my friend at a time when I hadn't any other friends, and when my own kith and kin didn't hold out a finger to rescue me from sinking to far deeper depths than those which you contemplate with such alarm and aversion to-day. In three words, she loves me—and in three more words, I am grateful. That, if you will believe me, sums up and disposes of the whole situation.'

It was well said, and he was an adept in the management of his voice; but Anne Dunville's shrewdness and common sense were proof against appeals to her emotions. She looked him full in the face, with that queer, wry smile of hers and with some admiration and affection, as well as a good deal of incredulity.

'Stuff and nonsense!' she rapped out.

'No,' he returned tolerantly, 'it isn't stuff and nonsense this time; and I am not acting a part, as you think I am. But the logic of facts must convince you; I haven't anything more to say.'

Anne, who had more to say, said it in vain. She went away at length, baffled, puzzled, with tears in her eyes, persuaded against her will that Harold must be sincere and that, for once,

he was not acting a part. It may be conjectured that he was always, consciously or unconsciously, acting a part; yet his self-approval on this occasion was grounded upon something rather more substantial than the satisfaction which he naturally felt at having with so noble an air waved intervention aside. For he meant to marry Lorna Fitzwalter and he meant to make her as happy as might be, plainly though he perceived that his own happiness, not to speak of his daily comfort, must go overboard in the process.

'Weighing one thing against another,' said he to himself, smiling ruefully, 'I should prefer death; but, as one doesn't die at my age and with a constitution like mine, life of a sort—oh, how well one knows what sort of a life it will be!—must be accepted. Well, there remains the stage.'

Almost he was inclined to think that the stage might suffice, and that whatever of joy and reality there was to be in his future existence must be found in the presentment of assumed characters. If he did not go quite the length of discovering that the joys and realities of his past had all been connected with the assumption of characters which were not his, it must be admitted that such feats of insight and analysis are not common. Has any man ever found out that he has no real character of his own at all? Yet there are many such men.

Everybody who was present at the last performance which the St. Martin's Theatre was destined to provide for a discriminating public declared afterwards that Mr. Dunville had fairly eclipsed himself that evening. Shepherd, a capable and experienced judge, is of the above opinion, and adds, with a touch of the superstition which seems to be inherent in all persons connected with the drama, that from the first he felt sure something was going to happen. People don't act like that unless something is going to happen to them, he asserts. What happened, up to the interval between the second and the thirds acts, was merely that a play which had already enthralled a long succession of audiences evoked even more than usual enthusiasm, and that the engagement—just given out—of the talented author, actor, and manager to the most distinguished of his subordinates was made the theme of considerable comment and discussion; but when that interval had been protracted for about five minutes beyond its appointed bounds, Harold stepped quietly before the curtain and said:

'May I ask you to be so kind as to disperse, without hurrying?

There is no occasion for hurry, nor is there at present the slightest danger; but I am sorry to say that a fire has broken out in a corner of the building, which we have as yet been unable to extinguish, and there is a possibility of the flames spreading. We think it better, therefore, that everybody should leave while there is still plenty of time to do so. I am sure I need not caution you against panic, for which there is no justification whatever.'

Panics are, of course, never justifiable; still, if Harold's hearers had known a little more of the true state of affairs than he deemed it wise to tell them, they might reasonably enough have been alarmed. As it was, they took him at his word, behaving, upon the whole, so well that the staircases and lobby were vacated expeditiously and with no worse mishaps than a few torn skirts and bruised elbows. But when the released spectators emerged upon the street, where a large crowd had gathered, they drew in their breath and thanked their stars that they were safe. For the sky was red with what had already assumed the proportions of a conflagration, tongues of flame were darting through the windows and above the roof at the back of the theatre, and the clamorous arrival of the fire brigade, prompt though it was, seemed as if it might prove too late to preserve the whole structure from being gutted. Somebody's carelessly discarded cigarette—Mr. Dunville's own cigarette, a few irresponsible babblers averred—had set light to a mass of highly inflammable material, and nothing could now save the insurance companies from a heavy loss. Happily, there could be no loss of life, inasmuch as all those employed behind the scenes were reported to have made their escape as speedily as the audience had done, though under somewhat more difficult conditions.

Harold himself, like the skipper of a sinking ship, was the last to leave the building. He crept out by the stage-door on all fours—half choked, even so, by the dense volumes of smoke beneath which he had to make his way—and the crowd greeted him with a cheer. Standing on the wet pavement and watching the steady streams of water which were brought to bear, with no apparent result, upon the blaze, he remarked coolly to Shepherd, whom he found at his elbow:

'We make a brilliant exit, don't we? What a pity we couldn't have deferred it until the piece began to show some signs of flagging! This will cost us several thousands, I presume, even though we are insured.'

Shepherd shook his head. 'Oh, yes; we are out of it for this

season, I'm afraid ; we must try to recoup ourselves in the provinces, that's all. We have all saved our skins, though, which at one moment didn't look like an absolute certainty.'

'Yes, thanks to your splendid courage and presence of mind !' cried Lorna Fitzwalter, suddenly thrusting herself through the throng and flinging her arms round Harold. 'Oh, what a fright you gave me !'

He gently disengaged himself, laughing and a little embarrassed. 'Please remember,' said he, 'that we have stationed ourselves in a glare which renders us conspicuous to all beholders, and that, as there isn't anything to cry about, we run some risk of being laughed at.'

'I don't care who sees me !' Lorna proudly declared ; 'everybody must know that what you have just done was no laughing matter.'

What he had done had been to clear the theatre composedly and systematically of a number of stupefied supernumeraries and shrieking, hysterical women. He had certainly given evidence of coolness and capacity in dealing with an emergency which might easily have developed into a catastrophe, and he was not, to tell the truth, ill pleased with himself. However, he made light of his achievement, such as it was.

'Oh, I had any amount of time,' said he ; 'all I had to do was to prevent them from getting clubbed in the doorway and to satisfy myself that no stragglers had been left behind. I should have walked out ten minutes ago, instead of crawling out, if I hadn't chosen to make assurance doubly sure by a last tour of inspection. Well, there isn't a soul in the place now, and our season is hopelessly compromised ; so we may as well enjoy the spectacle, which is really rather a fine one of its kind.'

But even while he spoke there arose from the packed mass of human beings around him a long-drawn, murmuring groan which caused him to start and turn his eyes towards the burning pile, from which he had momentarily averted them. On the summit, black against the red glow, was the wildly gesticulating figure of a woman—some foolish, belated dresser, probably, who had been forgotten or temporarily overpowered by the smoke, and who, finding descent impossible, had fled upwards to a point from which there could be little or no chance of rescuing her. For the longest fire-escape at hand was not long enough to reach the roof, and the roof itself might collapse at any moment. Harold sprang forward at once, shaking off Lorna, who divined his crazy purpose

and clutched him, shaking off Shepherd also, who followed suit with vehement protests. On the threshold of the stage-door a stalwart fireman placed both hands against his chest and sent him reeling back. 'No use, sir! you can't do no good that way!'

But he ducked under the man's arm and, dropping on his hands and knees, as before, vanished through the stage-entrance before he could be stopped. What insane impulse led him to hurl himself into that death-trap? Or was he, perhaps, not in the least insane, but, on the contrary, keenly, abnormally appreciative of a Heaven-sent opportunity? Did he on a sudden realise that, although he could never reach or save the unfortunate woman on the roof above him, a way lay open for saving himself gloriously from the most inglorious and tedious of futures, and that death by suffocation is, after all, no such bad death, as deaths go?

To these questions, which subsequently suggested themselves to several persons who had loved Harold Dunville and were to see him no more in this world, answers are wanting. He was pursued by some brave fellows who risked their own lives to preserve his; but pursuit for more than a yard or two was out of the question, and indeed his disappearance was followed almost immediately by the fall of the roof, which removed his fate finally from the purview of doubt or hope. First and last, in public and in private life, he had caused innumerable eyes to shed tears; *felix occidit*; there still remain many women, and even a few men, who cannot speak of him without a display of emotion which is considered unbecoming in this country.

What pæans were sung in the newspapers of the following day, what beautiful and eulogistic language was employed without stint by writers of leading articles, may readily be imagined. Imaginable, too, is the vociferous despair of poor Lorna Fitzwalter, and Shepherd's mute self-reproach, and the grief of Dick and Anne Dunville, permanently inconsolable for the loss of one who, had he lived, would probably have given them more anxiety than happiness. But it was reserved for Josephine Gardiner to sum up the dead man in a single sentence which must be accepted by his friends as apposite, if not entirely adequate.

'He was in many ways a charming, attractive sort of being,' she remarked pensively to Captain Desborough, who had just spoken of him in the warmest and most generous terms. 'A genius he certainly was not, and a satisfactory success he never

could have become in any walk of life. I don't think he had it in him to care to the extent which is really indispensable about anything or anybody; not even about himself, as that gratuitous plunge of his into a fiery furnace seems to prove. But let us do him justice; he was a great comedian—a great comedian up to the very last!

THE END.

A Journey from Edinburgh to Paris in 1802.

*FROM THE DIARY OF ROBERT SYM, ESQ., CLERK TO HIS
MAJESTY'S SIGNET*

ON Thursday July 8, 1802, I left Edinburgh on my way to London, intending to pass over to the Continent and visit Paris, along with Major Sir Edward Ryan, sometime of the 15th Light Dragoons, who was on his way to Vienna.

On Monday, July 12, I reached London, where I proceeded to the New Hummums in Covent Garden. This is an excellent house, and as there is a coffee house belonging to it, one can have breakfast and dinner at all hours in a genteel and comfortable manner. The expense of a dinner at a coffee house in London does not altogether depend upon what you order, but in a great measure upon the part of the town and the size of the room in which you dine. The New Hummums is a very large house, is uncommonly quiet, and seems to be under extremely good management. There are both hot and cold baths, which I am told are always ready. No women are admitted to this inn. All your baggage, however loose and scattered about your room, if you happen to be such a sloven, is in perfect safety. The word Hummums is Turkish, and means in that language a house of lodging or entertainment; but I never found any Englishman who had given himself the trouble to enquire into the etymology of the word. My first enquiry was for Sir Edward Ryan, who, to my great mortification, I found had relinquished all thoughts of going to the Continent sooner than September or October, having turned his attention again to the army, and expecting every day to be put on full pay. Of course I then gave up all thoughts of the journey, as it never would have suited me to have remained in London till September or October, or to have come up again

from Edinburgh at that time. My friend Major George Vanburgh Brown lodged at this time with Mr. Shedden in Guilford Street, and here, too, I met with a Mr. George Miller of Stirlingshire, who was amusing himself in London. With these gentlemen I went about a good deal.

I had never been at Dover, and having read and heard much of Dover Cliffs, of which a rather glowing description is given by Shakespeare, in *King Lear*, I was desirous of taking a ride that way, since my Continental trip was at an end. Having mentioned Dover to Mr. Miller, Major Brown, and Mr. Shedden, and none of them having ever been in that part of Kent, we resolved to set off on July 22, to sleep there that night, and next day return to London. Two postchaises were accordingly ordered, and I taking three shirts and as many cravats and pairs of stockings in a leather bag, we set off and arrived at Dover about six in the evening. A few miles before we reached Dover, we saw, from the top of a hill, the coast of France, and it was at this moment that it occurred to some of us whether it might not contribute to our amusement to go over and dine at Calais to-morrow and return next day. We dined at seven, having seen the castle and cliffs before dinner. Shakespeare's description of the cliffs is certainly exaggerated, yet they are sufficiently high to make any person of an ordinary head shrink back as he approaches. Upon enquiry we were told that we might go over to Calais and come back without passports, but that in our situation, having none from the British Government, we would not be allowed to go from Calais towards the interior of the country. This, however, we had not yet dreamed of. A packet-boat, we were told, would sail for Calais next day. Next morning we were informed that if we meant to pass over to Calais, we must now proceed to the Custom-house, enter our names, and carry our baggage down that it might be examined. This we immediately did. My baggage was soon conveyed and a Custom-house search seemed merely an apology for a fee. A man may carry anything with him he pleases for half a crown extra.

We embarked in the *King George* packet-boat, Captain King, at three o'clock in the afternoon, along with from fifty to sixty other passengers, some of them ladies, and after a fine passage, without even shifting a sail, landed at Calais at six. I was very sick part of the passage, most of the ladies lay on the cabin-floor and appeared in great distress. We went to the Lion d'Argent, of which Durogne is master, an artful, cunning, plausible fellow, who speaks English

well enough to impose upon anybody. The chief trade here is smuggling. We had an excellent dinner at nine, and afterwards had music and a dance with some of the ladies who had come over in the boat with us. Next morning we viewed the town by walking round the ramparts. The chief tradesmen seem to be goldsmiths, grocers, shoemakers, and tailors—all smugglers, I presume. In the course of our walk Mr. Miller met accidentally with a Mr. Shirley, who said that, if we chose to see Paris, now we were in France, he could procure us passports to that city from the Commissary-General, Citizen Mengeaud, although we had none from England. Without ever thinking of the consequence, or of how we were to get back from Paris, we agreed to this offer and were desired to wait upon Mr. Mengeaud at his office. This gentleman we found high and mighty in a most eminent republican degree, but he agreed to give us passports, because we had been recommended by Mr. Shirley. On returning back to Durogne we counted what money we had amongst us, and throwing it into a common fund, found we would have about as much as carry us on to Paris. But first we had to advance Citizen Durogne twelve guineas, which he was pleased to demand for the loan of an old postchaise without either horses or harness to Paris. This man also changed our guineas into French money, louis and crowns, so that of these crown pieces we had a bagful nearly as big as a man's head; but like Æsop's burden it was not long in melting. We also hired for the journey Monsieur Le Brun, an avant-courier, a native of Switzerland, to whom we were to pay five shillings a day. At six in the evening, July 24, we set off en cavalcade, with four horses to our carriage and our man in front, and that night at eleven reached Boulogne-sur-Mer. Here we had been recommended to the British Hotel, kept by one Parker, but it was more agreeable to our valet that we should go to another inn, and a most wretched one it was. We set off at six next morning, and went by Sterne's *Sentimental* road. Passed Amiens without halting, and got to Chantilly on Monday the 26th. We were struck with amazement at the majestic and wonderful palace here, which belonged to the Prince de Condé, and where he could accommodate five hundred strangers without interfering with the apartments reserved for the royal family. The princely magnificence of the stable is beyond anything I ever saw. Over every stall the prince has had carved the figure of a deer or boar, or some wild beast of the chase, of the size of life; but each has his head cut off below the ears, in remembrance, as if that were

necessary, of the fate of the unhappy family. The whole stables are filled with Bonaparte's cavalry. We were shown what remained of the theatres, the orangeries, the gardens and cascades, but all demolished and nearly level with the ground. Yet every person who showed us these ruins seemed, we thought, to sigh for the Ancient Government, and were inclined, if they durst, to bewail the miserable present lot of their country.

The road from Chantilly to Paris, about five-and-twenty miles, is very broad and paved like the streets of London. Great attention seems to be paid to keeping the roads in excellent order, and the postilions, whatever we could say, always preferred the causeway to the soft sides of the road, though an English postboy would never have touched the stones, at least in such weather as we had. In the stage betwixt Ailly and Flixecourt we were overtaken by a fellow on horseback who had been despatched after us, and who said that we ought to have paid two or three shillings more at the last stage than we had done. We argued the matter with him, and seemed to convince him that we had paid all that could justly be demanded; but still he said he must have the money. At last, after a good deal of altercation, one of our gentlemen swore in French that he would see him damned first. That instant the postilions alighted, and getting out of their boots, proceeded at once, and with the utmost gravity, to undo the harness and to leave us sitting in the road, at a distance from any village or house, and when it was turning dark. So we were forced to comply and pay what was demanded, though with a very bad grace. We comforted ourselves, however, by considering what we would have said and done had we met with such injustice and insolence in England.

A French postilion, who is generally an elderly man, first puts on his shoes and then steps into his boots, which are always standing on the road. These last are made of the strongest bend leather, painted black. They are bound with iron hoops, would hold at least three legs, and are stuffed with cotton and lined. From all this we inferred that the horses frequently fall with them; but though that did not occur on our journey, yet when such an accident does happen, the postilions' legs are perfectly safe, for the weight of an elephant would hardly crush one of these boots; all he will have to do is to take out his legs, and he may safely leave the horse lying on the boot. The last thing the postilion does is to step into his boots, and the first thing he does when he dismounts is to come out.

In entering or leaving Paris nothing can be more striking to an Englishman than the contrast between the suburbs of the two capitals. For many miles round London the town appears to follow you into the country; villas and boxes and gardens on every side, and the roads crowded with coaches, curricles, and pleasure horses, and immense wagons loaded with goods and provisions of all kinds. All is bustle, and noise, and gaiety, with plenty and independence written in the most legible characters on every countenance. On leaving Paris, the moment you pass the first barrier on the road to Franciade (ci-devant St. Denis), the first 'poste' to the north you are in the country, as much as if you were a hundred miles from the capital. Not a villa to be seen and hardly a mortal to be met with on the road. No coaches, nor curricles, nor pleasure horses, nor wagons; but here and there a few Englishmen going to Paris or returning, now and then a messagerie, or wretched stage coach, and straggling parties of whiskered soldiers, and, with the exception of these, all is silence and solitude. We approached the 'Capital of the World' about six on a very fine evening. At the barrier entering the city we were stopped and our passports demanded and examined. We were here asked at what place in the city we meant to lodge, and as we had previously been recommended to l'Hôtel des Étrangers, we mentioned that house, and immediately got liberty to pass. What would have been said to us if we had answered that we did not yet know what hotel we would go to I know not. Probably one would have been recommended to us, and a hint of this sort in such a case it would certainly be prudent to attend to. In passing through the narrow streets of Paris on our way to the hotel, we were struck with the mode of disposing of the lamps. They are suspended in the middle of the street, about fifteen or twenty feet high, from a rope which runs across from one house to another. The lamps themselves are very large, something like the shape of the lanthorn upon the stern of a ship of the line. They throw a great light not only upon the street, but into the windows of the houses, so that at their windows on both sides any person may read by lamp-light, and the general effect is pretty. But the closes and lanes of the city, and with which, like Edinburgh, it abounds, are necessarily left in utter darkness. The streets are narrow and dirty, much like the Cowgate. On our arrival at the hotel we were shown to a suite of apartments, at eight guineas a week, entering through each other in the Continental style, and with a large ante-chamber for our servant,

where, to be in the fashion, we powdered, and where our boots and shoes lay.

Immediately a man made his appearance, as a kind of attendant or waiter, and as soon as he left the room for something, our valet whispered to us that he was a spy from the police office, and cautioned us to be careful of what we said. We told the servant we cared not for fifty spies; for that, as we had come for our own amusement, we had nothing to conceal.

For the first two days, whenever we called a coach, the spy always mounted behind, under pretence of opening the door to us when we halted, but in reality to see where we went. When he found, however, that we only went to Mr. Merry's, the British resident, to Mr. Livingstone's, the American Ambassador, to M. Perigean's, the banker, and to the theatres, he ceased to escort us, but still remained in the ante-chamber, bringing in a dish now and then at dinner. We found, too, that we rose in his estimation by young Mr. Livingstone, the Ambassador's nephew, calling upon us, and by our dining at his Excellency's, and that no shabby fellow came near us. All this would no doubt be reported to his superiors. The morning after our arrival we waited upon the Counsellor of State, Citizen Dubois, a prodigious great man here, and who is no less than Prefect of the Police. Here we were received by his secretaries with the utmost haughtiness and reserve. We could only get access to the outward hall for more than half an hour among 'Mendici, mimæ, balatrones, hoc genus omne,' and then were ushered in to some of the clerks of this great man, who took our Calais passports from us and gave us new ones, allowing us to sojourn in the Commune of Paris for so many 'decades,' and *then* to report ourselves again at his office.

On getting these new passports we set off to ramble about from day to day. Saw the Thuilleries, the Louvre, the Palace and gardens of the Luxembourg, the Place de la Concorde, where the king was executed, the Bastille, now a woodyard, the operas, some of the twenty theatres open every night, Sundays included, the palace and gardens of Versailles, the Grand Trianon there, constructed by Louis XIV., and the Petit Trianon, built by the late unhappy queen, and many other public buildings of which we did not even know the names. We saw, too, the Apollo Belvidere, Laocoon and his sons, the Dying Warrior, and ten thousand paintings and statues and porphyry tables, &c., &c., the plunder of Italy and of the royal palaces in France; and lastly we saw Bonaparte review about 10,000 men in the court of the

Thuilleries. All this, too, we had to see in ten days, so it will easily be imagined that the sight of any one object must have been at the best very superficial. But still we *saw* them, though the rapidity with which we passed from one to another occasioned a whirl in my head that I did not altogether get clear of till some days after I was at rest in Scotland. For I came down in the mail coach without halting, which did not tend much to compose me.

On the Louvre, the Thuilleries, and the Palais du Corps Législatif, and indeed on the front of every public building, are inscribed in large gilt letters 'Liberté, Egalité, Indivisibilité, Fraternité, Union.' But all that you see of French *Liberty* is the word painted on these houses. On one church, and on one only, was printed 'Temple de la Raison et de la Vérité.' I saw no other public mark of Atheism. Within the great arch leading to the Hôpital des Invalides, one of the noblest structures in Europe, now filled with a number of Bonaparte's cavalry, sufficient to overawe the city, is printed in French 'Here the name of citizen is honoured.' Whatever honour may be supposed to be attached to this name at the Hospital of Invalides, we never heard or saw it once made use of except in the play bills, by or to anybody, while we were in France, and *we* certainly were not thought worthy of it. For by high and low, rich and poor, each of us was uniformly called Monsieur.

The excursion to Versailles is beautiful, but of the palace itself I cannot venture to give any description. I viewed it and left it with a heavy heart. No orator of Greece or Rome declaiming and thundering on the uncertainty of all human affairs and of all earthly grandeur, could have made such an impression on my mind as the moving eloquence of these silent walls. We were shown the queen's bedchamber, which, with the exception of wanting a bed and chairs, is, I suppose, in much the same situation as when she possessed it. The mirrors and paintings remain. The door was pointed out to us through which the Poissardes of Paris forced their entry into this room with yells, and the door through which the unhappy lady attempted to make her escape.

On the 'Quinze Thermidor' (Tuesday, August 3 1802) we saw Bonaparte review in the 'Cour des Thuilleries' what was certainly the flower of his army, for they were very different men to those we had seen on the road and at Calais. We never saw a finer body of men than these, nor finer horses and accoutre-

ments, and all clothed and equipped in the most complete manner. The corps of Chasseurs and of the Gens d'Armerie, in particular, were very fine men. The corps of Guides, too, seemed to be all picked. These last were commanded by young Beauharnais, the son of the wife of Bonaparte. We went to the Thuilleries about eleven, and soon after our arrival the iron gates were shut. Bonaparte had, we were told, come to town early that morning from the Malmaison, where he resides, about fifteen miles from town. He was then in the Thuilleries. From what we could learn the particular road by which he arrives and returns is not always known beforehand, and it would seem that he takes the same precautions as Cromwell, towards the close of his life, did. Young Mr. Livingstone, the nephew of the American Ambassador, told us that he was very 'economical of his person.'

About twelve o'clock Bonaparte came down the great stair of the Thuilleries and one of our party, who happened to be right opposite to the porch, told us that he mounted his horse from *wooden steps*. He then rode forward, accompanied by about fifteen or twenty generals and a Mameluke from Egypt. All his suite were dressed and powdered in the most showy manner, but Bonaparte himself wore a plain green coat with a narrow white cloth edging at the seams, such as servants in this country sometimes wear, and a cocked hat without any lace. His hair is very black and is cropped quite close to his head and neck, so that his ears are all bare. It falls down over his brow. His complexion is swarthy, his face long, a fine nose, his eyes are very dark and his eyebrows fall, or are drawn down, much over his eyes. His cheek bones are high, and his cheeks sink between the bones of the face and those of the chin, which gives him a wasted, consumptive look. His upper lip projects in the middle of his mouth, considerably over the under one, and his chin is sharp and prominent. He does not seem to be above five foot six, and is very thin. He is thirty-three years of age. To me he appeared to have the look of anxiety, or rather of terror. He was mounted on a beautiful Arabian grey horse, one of the most perfect animals I ever saw. His saddle, or rather housing, on which he sat, was purple velvet, richly embroidered with gold and a great many nets and trappings. Almost as soon as he came out of the porch, he galloped to the right of the lines. From thence he cantered, attended by the generals, to the left, and passing through each line alternately from right to left and from left to right, he came round and again took his situation in

front, still surrounded by the general officers. He sat there till the troops broke into sections, and marching to the right in quick time saluted him with their colours. As these passed he took off his hat, but he neither sat his horse nor did he take off his hat like a gentleman. When the troops passed him, they faced to their right, and countermarching to their left, filed off through the iron gates to their respective quarters. Bonaparte was nearly an hour and a half on horseback on this occasion. During all that period he never once opened his lips, nor did he turn his head to the right or to the left. He looked straight over his horse's ears. No person spoke to him, nor was he cheered or huzzaed, either when he came into the Cour or when he departed. We were told in the morning that we should probably see him kiss some of the soldiers, if he presented sabres or trumpets or drumsticks of honour to them. We saw nothing of this sort, though there were two regiments, the 8th and 24th, who on this occasion got new colours. These two corps had, we believed, done something wrong. But we were not very fond of appearing inquisitive about such particulars. The kissing was, I presume, only Bonaparte's practice formerly.

For Lowliness is young Ambition's ladder,
To which the climber upwards turns his face.

Most of the soldiers wear earrings, and the hair of their upper lips is allowed to grow about half an inch long. In a black-complexioned man this has a very martial appearance. The pioneers wear their beards long like Jews. They were all of them black-complexioned men and the hair of their heads was powdered.

When all the soldiers had filed off, Bonaparte dismounted, again by steps, and immediately ran quickly up the stairs to his apartments. At this time I was standing a little to the right of the porch.

Young Mr. Livingstone informed us of a singular incident, which took place the first time he was presented to Bonaparte. He was standing in the presence chamber through which the First Consul was to pass, and in the front line, and a lady was standing immediately behind him. Just before Bonaparte came out to this room, the lady asked Mr. Livingstone if he would allow her to stand in his place. Mr. L. told her that on any other occasion he would willingly have accommodated her, but, as he had come to be presented in form, he hoped she would allow him to stand where he was. Upon this the lady got herself squeezed

forward between Mr. L. and some other gentleman, who stood next to him. Bonaparte then came in, and just as he was passing Mr. Livingstone the lady sprang forward and clasped the First Consul in her arms. Mr. L. said he would have given his whole estate to be a thousand miles off. He supposed that she was stabbing him, and expected that everybody in the room would have been cut in pieces by the Guards. Two grenadiers flew up with their sabres to cut her down, but Bonaparte held out his arm to them, and called, '*Prenez garde!*' He then got himself disengaged from her. This woman proved to be the widow of one of his generals. She was deranged, had given her friends the slip, and came in this manner to present a petition to Bonaparte. It was immediately given out in public orders that the time and manner of this woman's application had been so improper that whatever might be her situation, or that of her family, no notice would *ever* be taken of either her or them. But Mr. Livingstone added that he understood orders had afterwards been issued privately to make some enquiry into her situation and circumstances.

The people in France seem to be in great misery; no trade, nor commerce, nor comfort, nor security; all squeezed and trodden down and oppressed under a military despotism. The face of almost every man you meet is full of anxiety and terror, and if in passing along the street you hear anybody laugh, if you will look round you will find it is an Englishman. At nightfall the houses and shops seem to be shut, and all those who are not gone to the playhouses or to drown themselves in the Seine (which occurs almost every night) keep themselves out of the way. Bonaparte's drums and patrols, horse and foot, are constantly parading through the streets, day and night. He has 10,000 men in the city, and 20,000 more within an hour's call, and the stables at Chantilly are full of cavalry. It is, I presume, the same all over the country. Where the dead are interred in Paris, I know not. We saw no burying grounds. But I one day saw a funeral passing through Rue Vivienne, while I was standing at the gate of our hotel. The body was placed on a bier something like one of our hearses, but as the canopy roof of black velvet was supported by four slender pieces of wood, one at each corner, the corpse lay quite exposed. It was covered with a black velvet pall, through which the shape of the body could be quite distinctly seen. It was plain, therefore, that it was not in a coffin; wood, I presume, is too scarce and too dear in Paris to allow anything of

this sort. I am told that if a person in Paris dies to-day, he is buried to-morrow at noon.

When the National Convention dug up in 1793 the leaden coffins of all their kings and queens at St. Denis, to be cast into bullets; when, in Mr. Burke's splendid diction, 'Their turpitude purveying to their malice, they emblumed the dead for bullets to assassinate the living,' the friends of an *ordinary* man can perhaps hardly complain of his remains being denied a coffin of any kind.

It was in the afternoon of Wednesday, August 4, that we obtained our passports, and resolved to leave Paris that evening. But first we found that before we could get a chaise and horses we must present the said passports to the postmaster. This ceremony having been achieved, and this dignitary satisfied (although he made us wait, we thought, a long while), at last the horses made their appearance at the hotel, and having discharged a heavy bill, paid our spy five shillings a day for taking care of us, paid waiters and chambermaids (though we saw none of these), boots and porters, &c., &c., and all of them liberally, we stepped into the carriage. Our landlady, although she had got a pretty considerable sum from us, did not think it worth her while to see us in. We found none of that quick, flattering attention so conspicuous upon the English road when a postchaise is in sight, and I rather think there was nobody to put up the footboard and shut the carriage door. All this, however, we forgave, and I would have forgiven ten times more, for now at last I felt myself on the road to England.

We reached Chantilly about eleven, and meant to have passed on without sleeping, but this was not agreeable to our valet, who, having something to say to a girl there, resolved that *we* should remain that night at Chantilly. He first pretended that there were robbers on the road, and finding that ineffectual, he contrived to take off the nut which screws on one of the hind wheels, and then represented to us what a providential escape we had just made. I am certain he must have taken it off, for I think it was impossible that the carriage could have gone on ten yards without it. We let him know that we thought so, at which he was pleased to smile, and so we laughed, and there we remained for the night. I expected that Monsieur le Brun would have *found* the nut next morning, about the hour which he might think proper for us to set off. I am positive this would have been the case if he had not seen, the night before, that we suspected him of the trick. So in the morning no nut could be found. Therefore a smith in the village of Chantilly took us in hand, and in three hours fitted

on a proper nut and screw. We reached Amiens about seven in the evening and stayed there all night. In the first stage from Amiens to Pecquigny next day, one of our horses, after making an odd kind of flourish or two, in a moment dropped down dead. So we disentangled the carcase, and drove on with three for the remainder of the stage. We reached Boulogne late, and went to the British Hotel kept by one Parker, where we found everything comfortable. This man Parker told us that he had, under the administration of Citizen Robespierre, the fate of being confined along with five others fourteen months in prison for being an Englishman. Of these six, four were taken out at different times and guillotined. Four more were put in, and of this second six, four were again taken out and suffered death like the former. Our host had thus had a pretty near escape. We had not been ten minutes in Boulogne till we were applied to by French sailors offering to carry us across the Channel from Boulogne, instead of going on to Calais. This plan was extremely agreeable to us all. Our passports, however, expressly mentioned our route as by Calais, but we were told that the officer of police in Boulogne was a mild, good-tempered man (and so he must be a Royalist at heart) and always ready to oblige an Englishman. To this gentleman I went, therefore, next morning, and he, in the most frank manner, granted our request, and backed our passports at once with much civility. The wind being at S.W. we were all in great spirits. We now once more saw the Land of Liberty on the other side of the Channel, like a faint bluish cloud ; but we were told that *that* was England, and in a few hours we were to be out of the reach of The Iron Republic. Captain Cornon, of *L'Achille*, told us the tide would answer between four and five. We agreed to pay him ten louis for our passage, and he was permitted to take advantage of any other passenger who might turn up. The only person who appeared was an Englishman, apparently about sixty, with a drunken countenance and a sporting hat covered with partridge's feathers. He introduced himself to us in the street, said he was happy to have found his countrymen, and would be at the harbour in due time. He accordingly made his appearance there, and producing his passport, was therein designated as 'The Right Honourable Antony, Earl of —.' We bowed again to the Right Honourable Antony, and in a style somewhat more respectful than on the street at Boulogne, for those who never saw a Lord would not at first sight have taken *him* for one. We had sent on board *L'Achille* a comfortable sea store of claret, champagne, brandy,

and bread; and the Right Honourable the Earl of —— had, we found, been not less provident.

We sailed at four o'clock, and went over at the rate of about seven miles an hour. We did not forget our sea store, all of which we drank. About an hour after we had sailed from Boulogne, the sailors made a fire below and dressed some salt fish, which made the wine drink deliciously, in so much that before we reached the English shore the Right Honourable the Earl of —— was utterly unable to speak or stand. At one time he was very near gone. He fell, and his head and shoulders were over the ship's side; but luckily the captain got hold of him, and drew him back, with the loss of his hat, which fell into the sea.

We reached Dover about nine, and a boat having come off, we got on board of her with some difficulty in the dark, and all got safe on shore, except my Lord ——, who, as he could not be put on board the boat in his particular situation, was carried down to the cabin. Here he remained snug in *L'Achille* till next morning at five, when he got ashore sober, and we found him in the parlour of our hotel at breakfast-time, reading the newspapers and with a new Dover hat, which was the occasion of some mirth at his expense. He accompanied us to London, which we reached next morning, but neither his company nor his conversation was very pleasing to us. I left London in the mail coach on Thursday, August 12. The coach set off from the Post Office in Lombard Street at ten minutes past eight in the evening, and as I did not halt on the road, I got to Edinburgh in due course of post, on Sunday the 15th, before six in the morning. I must acknowledge that, on again entering my own little door and hearing the well-known rattle of the latch, I felt something similar to what has been so elegantly and feelingly described by Catullus, whom, from his way of speaking about beds and sparrows and one Lesbia, I suspect may have been a bachelor.

O quid salutis est beatissimis curis
Cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino
Labore fessi, venimus Larem ad nostram
Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto!

M. B. W.

The Swordsman and the Count.

I.

IT is some time since I left Master Everard Knighton on his way to dinner with his betrothed, Viola Torrens, and her mother, after a curious experience in Monsieur Grison's *salle d'armes* in London, where he had fenced with a brilliant and eccentric opponent.¹ From that time until now there had been nothing of particular note in his life from day to day. He prospered in his work, and was mightily content as the wheels of fate ran him smoothly on towards the event of his marriage, delayed only until he should take up a partnership promised him on a vacancy in a great publishing firm—the passing from author to publisher is not unknown, and may one day be as usual as from actor to manager—the head of which was an old family friend and connection. It was in deference to Mrs. Torrens that the young people consented to wait for what would be a more secure position than that of an author, however successful for the time, with limited private means. The partner whom he was to succeed would shortly retire, and meanwhile Everard was finishing a book which involved considerable research, antiquarian and other. The pursuit of documents in the case led him to spend some time in a certain German university town, where Mrs. Torrens and her daughter were to join him on their way back from a stay further south. Meanwhile, of course, he corresponded constantly with Viola, and his letters to her contained an account of another queer acquaintance which he made, again by means of his love for sword-play. As lovers' letters are not meant for the general eye, and can scarce be entertaining except in a breach of promise of marriage case, I shall quote but sparingly from our Everard, preferring a direct narration of events which were detailed by degrees as they happened in several letters. At the same time, one may perhaps be permitted extracts here and there, with due omissions. It was not Knighton's first visit to

¹ See 'The Swordsman's Adversary,' *Longman's Magazine*, April 1903.

Sachsenberg. He had been there on reading parties and other semi-holidays in his undergraduate days, and later on before he had settled to take up his pen in London; and, indeed, as Viola, too, knew something of the picturesque old town, they had exchanged impressions concerning it early in that acquaintance at places where they sing, and dance, and dine, and so following which ripened into further and better knowledge, and so into engagement to marry.

'It is curious,' wrote Everard, in one of his early letters on this present visit, 'and I believe the remark has been made by many people of many places, how much and how little the old town, its surroundings, its outside, and its inside have suffered change. Nothing, of course, can alter much of the outwardness, or anything of "the true inwardness" of that immemorial view, especially if one finds oneself alone there at night-tide. [As Master Everard was at this time of a musing and castle-building disposition, he found himself there in these conditions a good deal more often than of yore; and as he had, like Scythrop, a fine eye for consequences, and therefore for causes, he dwelt on the fact with some prolixity.] Nor can anything alter in essentials the delight of the great terrace over the river, where one can hear at a comfortable distance, and to the *obligato* of a cigarette, the strains of the excellent band and, at times when he plays, of the State Authorised Trumpeter. Him have I heard, and fain would hear again, or his present successor, whom I shall probably hear next week. And if he plays that particular solo—but of all this more as I see and hear it from day to day. Meanwhile, needless to tell you that one of my first visits was to the Fecht-Schule, where I found, as I hoped, my old friend the master, skilful alike in the artificial *Schlägerei* and in all varieties of true swordsmanship. He looks not a day older, and is in manner if anything younger, perhaps because his work is now lightened by the assistance of his son, who bids fair to grow into such a man as his father—tall, thin, masterful, spectacled, austere, with a rare smile for favourite pupils, old and new. Why do I dwell on these trivial details? Perhaps to put off the mention of an odd impression which is running to the tip of my pen. There was something in the arrangement of the fencing-room which brought back to me as with a flash the arrangement of little Grison's *salle*. And in the same flash came back to me from start to finish the whole scene of my encounter with that strange "adversary" (I put the word in quote-marks to remind you of your fanciful (?) interpretation),

Mr., Monsieur, or Herr Manteuffel, who caught me up on my old trick of a quotation you dislike, and seemed to be baffled at the very zenith of his lightning speed and skill when he caught sight of your little gold cross, till then hidden by my fencing-jacket. *Seemed*, I say—and think. But, as you know, I have often wondered—idly enough, no doubt. And perhaps the immersion in the very heart-country of that spirit of German romance which only Carlyle has ever truly caught up into English (long before he wrote deliberate German-English) has set me wondering, as I remember that scene, once again.'

'Now, I,' said Viola to herself, as she read her lover's letter, 'have never wondered at all; but that may be a question of temperament.'

'Certainly,' the letter went on, 'there was something—what shall I say? fantastic, to put it at that—about the whole business, and this sudden vivid recollection of it all, after I had well-nigh forgotten it, has brought in its train my old fancy that I have not seen the last of Manteuffel, that the game was but a drawn one, and that he expressed his hope and expectation of another meeting. But whither are my pen and my be-Teutonised imagination running? Even as I write I remember how you laughed, nay, smiled rather, at the fancy, and that remembrance alone remains with me.'

'Ah!' said Viola to herself again, as, having read the letter through twice and thrice, she looked yet again at this passage, 'one may smile and smile and, I hope, *not* be a villain. Well!'—and with this she consigned her Everard's letter to its appointed place, and in her answer touched but very lightly on the writer's fancies, though it may well be that she thought the more.

In his next letter Knighton talked of expeditions by wood and river, of falling in with old friends of various nationalities, and of the help given to him in matters concerning his immediate work by one such friend, Wildmann, an ex-champion schläger of the Westphalen corps, who had now exchanged the high boots, jacket, and cap with device of the corps student for the sober garb and gold-rimmed spectacles that befit a rising professor.

While this young Professor and Knighton were talking one afternoon, Wildmann, *à propos* of some subject of antiquarian interest which turned up, said to Everard: 'By-the-by, there is a man coming here whom I think you might like to meet.'

'Indeed!' said Everard, 'who and what, may one ask? Though, of course, your opinion, my dear Wildmann, that he should be worth meeting is quite enough.'

'Well,' replied Wildmann, 'odd as it may seem, I'm not quite sure that I can answer your question!'

'Is there a mystery, then?' inquired Knighton, pricking up his ears. 'Why, so much the more interesting.'

'N—no,' said the other, 'no mystery, only—well, do you know it never occurred to me till this moment that I don't happen to know anything about him except his name?'

'And that is?'

'Graf Tradioun von Marexil. Beyond that I cannot tell you even his nationality for certain. He speaks German, French, and English perfectly, as you will find out for yourself if you meet him.'

'His title is German?'

'Perhaps; but that doesn't tell one much of itself, and I certainly have not looked it up in the *Almanach de Gotha*. After all, what more does one want to know about a pleasant acquaintance than that he is pleasant, well-mannered, and interesting? If I were disposed to develop the acquaintanceship into friendship, that would be another matter, no doubt.'

'Ah!' said Everard, 'then you don't feel any yearning for the Pylades and Orestes business with him?'

'Not at all; and if you asked me why, I couldn't tell you. One can't account for these things. I met him first in company with little Jordan, our theatre and opera director; but, of course, you know him of old.'

'Little Jordan? I should think I did, with his whole slender frame ablaze with enthusiasm and his eyes gleaming purposeful through his double glasses. Well?'

'Well, they were getting up Meyerbeer's *Robert the Devil* for the first time for two or three years. Jordan was very anxious that it should be thoroughly well done. He did me the honour to consult me on certain points as to costume and arms, and when the thing was well in progress he asked me to a rehearsal. It was there that I met Marexil, whose grandfather, or great-uncle, or something, had, it appears, known Meyerbeer. You will find when you meet him that he is somehow in touch with almost everybody of interest, and is full of unobtrusive but wide information—something, I may add, like yourself in that, though, to be sure, in other ways no two men could well be more unlike. Though, to be sure again,

like you, he has a great fondness for everything connected with "the white arm."

'Ah!' said Everard, 'this promises to be interesting. Now, what is this Marexil like?'

'That,' answered Wildmann, 'you shall find out for yourself. But I will tell you a few things about him as quickly as I can, for he may turn up at any time now. To begin with, I may say that he is what *you* would certainly call a magnetic person.'

'Why?'

'Because, with your temperament, you are easily impressed by that kind of—what shall I say?—strange influence.'

'Oho!' quoth Everard, 'our philosopher-in-chief admitting the existence of a strange influence. Then it must be strange indeed.'

'Maybe it is. But to continue. Marexil arrived at rehearsal a little late, but no sooner was he there than a new spirit seemed to be infused into the whole thing. Everyone concerned, from the director down to the humblest super, seemed to acknowledge him, and, what was more, to trust to him as master of the event.'

'Why,' interrupted Everard, 'that was but natural, as he had, or was supposed to have, traditions handed down from Meyerbeer himself.'

'Quite so; but it was not only that. I can best explain by instances. There was something—no one could quite tell what—unsatisfactory in the scene of the "animation" of the nuns, especially in the first movements of the abbess who figures as chief dancer in that weird and fantastic transformation. Marexil spotted the weak point in a moment, and showed how it should be done by himself taking the place of the chief dancer. How remarkable it was that he should do that with perfect grace and lightness, even for a few moments, you will realise when you see him. Perhaps even more remarkable when there was a difficulty about the movements of Bertram at a particular point. Bellaria, good alike, as you know, as actor and singer, who was playing the part, is not overmuch accustomed to ask for instruction or advice, but he, like all the others, seemed to have fallen under a spell, and in the most natural way appealed to the stranger to help him over the stile. Thereon Marexil changed places with Bellaria, and on the instant he seemed—nay, rather he *became*—Bertram, appearing, without a moment's warning, to be tall, stately, impressive, above all, horribly demoniacal; while, as he sang under his breath the words and music to which the business

was to be fitted, one could not but see that he was a finished artist and suspect that, had he given his full voice, it would have proved to rival that of Bellaria himself. Had you been there, the transformation, brief as it was, to diabolical grandeur would certainly have struck you as it did me.'

'Well,' said Knighton, 'be that as it may, you make me curious to see this Graf of yours.'

'Unless,' answered Wildmann, 'my ears deceive me—and you remember the old student joke about my having fox's ears—you will see him in a moment.'

And, sure enough, on the last word, our Everard heard, in his turn, a footstep, quick, but not loud, outside, followed by a knock at the door, which, in answer to Wildmann's 'Come in,' admitted a personage whom Wildmann greeted and proceeded to introduce to Knighton as Graf Tradioun von Marexil. Everard saw that he was a man young, of middle height, with a figure which might have been good but for excessive girth and portliness, with fair hair and slight beard and moustache, and with an expression of such abounding humour in a pleasant-looking face that there immediately rose in Knighton's mind a thought which was instantly detected by the newcomer, who said, in a fat, comfortable voice, and with a jovial laugh: 'I know what you are thinking, Mr. Knighton; you are not the first. You seem to look on a young, or, let us say, comparatively young, likeness of Falstaff. No apologies, I beg. Perhaps I am neither so young nor so jolly—so humorous, let me say—as I look; but at least I can boast that, like Sir John, I have sometimes been the cause of humour in others.' A curious piercing look came into the visitor's deep-set grey eyes as he said this, and he quickly added: 'I take the greater pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Knighton, because I am well acquainted with much of your work, and I have lately been specially delighted by your paper on Gargoyles, with its enticing illustrations. Ah, if I had your skill as a draughtsman!'

'It is very kind of you to say so,' said Everard, smiling.

'Not at all; and I have a special reason. When I was in Edelstadt a day or two ago, I saw a most charming gargoyle. It was humorous, but it had something sinister in it, too. I wish I could draw it; but it looked something like this.'

Marexil put his hands together, with the palms upwards, and dropped his chin upon them. His full, beaming face grew suddenly to leanness, the nose became pointed, the mouth took on a crooked, bantering smile, and the eyes and brow threatened a

horrible malevolence. The change was instantaneous, and as instantly the face resumed its former pleasant aspect. Everard could scarce suppress a cry of astonishment as he said: 'Why, now I have seen, or better than seen, your gargoyle. But what a transmogrification! It is wonderful!'

'Oh, it is nothing,' answered the other. 'A great-aunt of mine, who knew Lablache, was fond of describing how he used to picture on his expressive face all the changes from the beauty of a bright summer's day to a storm and back again, and I took to practising the trick. But I wish you would tell me something more in detail about a certain house you mention,' and here he glided off into a conversation which he guided with almost imperceptible but remarkable skill into subjects of special interest to his host and to his fellow-guest; and after about half an hour of this he took his leave, readily acceding to a request to come again soon.

'What do you think of him?' asked Wildmann, after Marexil had disappeared.

'I can understand your feeling about him,' answered Everard. 'You have not said to me "How do you like him?" and that, also, I understand.'

'That,' said the Professor, 'is because of your being so impressionable, and my well knowing that is the reason why I did not ask if you liked Marexil.'

'Why should I not tell you, after all?'

'Partly because you do not know yourself. I, as you know, do not trouble my head about such things. I make very few friends such as you, and, as an acquaintance, Marexil is certainly interesting.'

'Very,' rejoined Everard, rather absent-mindedly.

'And,' continued the other, 'full of surprises. I did not know until to-day that he knew anything of patristic lore; yet he evidently has it at his fingers' ends.'

'Devil doubt him!' said Knighton, with what seemed needless energy; and then, with a sudden change of tone, 'You didn't see him full face when he suddenly turned himself into a gargoyle. It was, to say the least, rather uncanny. He might well say that there was something sinister about that gargoyle.'

'Bah!' cried the Professor, 'he has an indiarubber face, and for all we know may be a practised actor.'

'Nothing more likely,' Everard made answer, rather moodily.

'H'm,' said Wildmann, 'I felt sure you would be imagining mysteries about him. I don't believe you would be surprised if you saw him transformed into a were-wolf before your eyes!'

'I don't believe I should,' answered Everard, joining gaily in the other's laugh. 'Now, let us come for a ride or for a row on the river, which you like.'

Two days later Marexil again appeared at the Professor's rooms, and again found Everard Knighton established there, as usual, for the afternoon. On this occasion the talk, playing round and with many subjects, on all of which the Count showed himself thoroughly well equipped with information, turned presently and naturally enough on students' duels and the use and origin of that remarkable weapon the *schläger*, in regard to which the three discoursed learnedly of the *Haurappier* and other gauds. Thence to 'the white arm' in general was an obvious step, and here Marexil proved himself thoroughly well up in Knighton's various published contributions to the science of sword-play. 'I,' he said, casually, 'have what I may call an inherited interest in such matters, since one of my forbears was a friend of the Chevalier d'Eon, and, going further back, I had an ancestor who was closely associated with the celebrated Jarnac.'

'One would like to know,' remarked Wildmann, 'what your ancestor thought of his friend's or associate's *coup*.'

'Probably,' replied the Count, 'he thought nothing more than that it was successful. The way of the world. It might be more interesting to know what La Chataigneraye thought of it. But we are more particular nowadays in matters of fence, are we not, Mr. Knighton? By the way, we were talking of masters of fence just now. Your master was——'

'Grison,' said Everard, as the other paused for the name.

'To be sure, yes, I might have remembered from a note on page 45 of your *Masters and Methods*. Altogether charming—is he not?' Marexil added the last three words rather as if they were an afterthought of conventional politeness.

'I have always thought him so,' said Everard.

'And what a delightful little monograph of his on the Colichemarde—or Königsmarck, to give it its proper name,' continued Marexil. 'It would be interesting to make a list of the Professors of the Art of the Sword who have wielded the pen also with skill. Who is responsible for the somewhat fustian, as it strikes me, sentiment that the pen is mightier than the sword?'

'Bulwer Lytton, I think, Count,' said Wildmann. 'Is it not so, Knighton?'

'Yes, certainly, Bulwer Lytton, afterwards first Lord Lytton,' answered the Englishman.

'To be sure—how could I forget it?' said Marexil. 'A skilful dramatist, and, apart from his plays, a most fascinating writer. He got pretty near to certain secrets which——' he paused, and then quickly added, as if to put the subject away; 'but after all, perhaps, he only anticipated some discoveries of science.' There was just a suspicion of irony in his utterance of the last word, but he swiftly took the conversation back to fencing, asking Knighton which school of fence he preferred.

'Why,' said Everard, 'I suppose the French, if for no more exquisite reason than that I know a little more of it, or I should say, am a little less ignorant of it, than of any other.'

'Ah!' said the Count, 'I am sure you are too modest; but it's a good fault. Now, I have been rather carried away of late—when I have taken up a foil—with the Italian method. There seems to me more—what shall I say?—more devil in it.'

'With all that cat-like jumping about?' objected Everard, with a mild accent of protest.

'Oh!' said the other, 'I have little doubt I am wrong, and I should dearly like to renew my acquaintance with the French school, especially if you, Mr. Knighton, would act as my guide and re-introducer. What say you, gentlemen, to coming over to my rooms on the *Allée* to while away an hour or so? There is everything needed for fencing there, and I will give you tobacco and tea, or Munich beer, as you like.'

The invitation was accepted. Wildmann, while they were preparing to set out, found occasion to say to Knighton, 'I did not know that he had rooms here, still less where they were.'

II.

WHEN they arrived at Marexil's dwelling-place, their host showed them into a long, lofty room, which seemed part studio, part library; but with an open space quite big enough for a couple, or at need even two couples, to fence. Making, as was his wont, a survey something *à la Houdin* of the room as he entered, Knighton discerned on an easel a powerful sketch, in *sanguine*, of what was clearly the last scene of *Don Giovanni*, with the Don welcoming his statue-guest with unruffled courtesy, and with Leporello

shivering behind him. And on a handsome and seemingly special shelf, in an opposite corner of the room, his eye was caught by beautifully bound editions of Catullus, *Æschylus*, Kant, and, of all elbowers, Aquinas. More he might have embraced in his rapid glance, but his attention was engaged by the Count's cordial, voluble, pleasant welcome to his roof-tree. The host insisted on their merely tasting some exquisite tea—for to do more than that, he said very wisely, might tempt some nervous shakiness—and he then exhibited the more calming and equally good cigar and Munich beer taken off ice, and then, duly jacketed and with masks ready and foils in hand, Marexil and Knighton faced each other in the empty space. The merest apology for a real assault, said the host, with himself, 'fat and scant of breath,' as an opponent to the Englishman; while Wildmann, who was no bad judge, looked on with a fresh cigar in his mouth. The Englishman and the Count of unknown nationality began, like lovers of the art, with the salute, and they executed it like artists. Wildmann noticed specially how light on his feet Marexil seemed, in spite of that burden of 'something a round belly,' borne by him as by the English prototype to whom he himself had made reference. 'Yet,' said the Professor to himself in the pleasurable reflectiveness induced by good Munich beer and good tobacco, 'if they were playing an assault for hits, surely my excellent English, but-not-the-less-cosmopolitan friend, Knighton, would, with his light and firmly knit frame, tire out the fat one to his defeat. Well, let us watch. This is vastly pleasant.' And with that he seated himself in a comfortable chair well out of the fencers' way, and proceeded to watch the assault with leisured keenness.

Marexil came on guard with the hanging guard, but as the play, in which it was clear to Wildmann that neither fencer was putting out anything like his full strength, went on, the Count more and more fell into the Italian method, and, oddly, though he was handling a French foil, this appeared to cause no awkwardness in his deft parries and ripostes—he remained almost entirely on the defensive, while Knighton tried one attack after another skilfully, tentatively, without fire or conviction. 'Ah!' thought Wildmann, 'our Falstaff knows more than is seen at first. Mayhap, if real men in buckram attacked him, they would find it no easy task.' He smiled to himself at the conceit, and then perceived that Knighton, slightly roused by a riposte on the forearm, began another attack, advancing with more vigour. This time he was met by a swift parry and riposte entirely in the French method, and the

riposte caught him full on the chest, and was duly acknowledged. Then Marexil attacked, somewhat idly perhaps, was met by a *tac-au-tac*, parried in turn, missed his riposte, and lowered his point for breathing space. After that, Knighton attacked again, Marexil made, as Wildmann rightly thought, the same parry and riposte he had before employed, but this time failed to plant the riposte. Both men stopped by common impulse—for though they had not put themselves out, the day was hot enough to make the exercise, especially with jackets worn over 'street' shirts and trousers, somewhat trying, so that they gladly sat down and joined Wildmann in repose and converse. There is an undeniable comradeship of the foil in expert hands, and so they talked fencing as if they had fenced together for weeks past.

'That was a baffling parry and riposte of yours, Count,' said Knighton, 'at first—but when I felt it coming the second time, it suddenly flashed on me that I had met it before, and my hand flew to the right answer—you know the feeling—as if automatically.'

'This,' replied Marexil, 'is just the kind of praise one likes. But tell me which parry and riposte you mean. I think, of course, that I know; but I should like to be sure.'

'I think I know too,' interposed Wildmann; 'but I think also that I do not know quite enough to describe it accurately.'

'Well,' said Knighton, 'correct me if I am wrong; but surely you parried *cercle* on my advance, and riposted in *seconde* with the point high.'

'Quite right, quite right,' cried Marexil; 'it is not, I suppose, the very most usual of combinations. But pray tell me where you have met with it before.'

He said this with a half-laugh of infectious joviality, and his grey eyes twinkled with amusement.

'Why,' cried Knighton, 'I have been trying all this time to recollect, and now quite suddenly it has flashed upon me. It was at Grison's.'

'At Grison's! Ho! Ho!' replied Marexil, with an increasing geniality of profound bass chuckle.

'Yes. And my antagonist was a certain Mr. or Monsieur Manteuffel.'

'Oh!' cried the Count, with a sort of comfortable ecstasy of laughter, 'this is better and better!'

'Why,' broke in the Professor, 'do you partly know the man?'

'Ho! Ho!' answered Marexil, in a kind of velvet thunder; 'what is it that Hamlet says—"to know a man well were to know

himself"? Mr. Manteuffel—ha! ho! ho!—I shall certainly not say I know him well; but I have seen him—I see him sometimes, and what is more, and why I laugh is, I believe it is from this fellow that speak to you that he learn that parry and riposte.' And the Count, who, in what seemed the excess of his amusement, had lapsed into a slight accent and a lax grammar—a thing that befel him scarce once in a blue moon—gave another Lablache chuckle, drained a draught of lager beer, lay back beaming in his chair, and then said, still smiling, but with more deliberation and quiet: 'You met this Mr. Manteuffel by chance, did you say?'

'I don't think,' said Everard, 'I said anything about it; but, so far as I know, it was quite by chance that he turned up at Grison's, and once he was there it was natural that the chief frequenters of the place should cross blades with him.'

—'To be sure,' interjected the Count—

'But I particularly remember him,' continued Knighton, 'because he and I had an encounter—interrupted, and therefore left unfinished, by a queer accident. There was a ridiculous kind of wager depending on it.'

Now, no sooner had our Everard spoken these words than he wondered why on earth he had uttered them, and wished vaguely that he could recall them; but his interlocutor merely said: 'A wager—ah!' drank some more lager beer, and then quietly turned the conversation on to various subjects, apart from the white arm, which had special interest for his guests and himself.

It was only just as the Professor and the Englishman were taking leave of their entertaining and well-informed host that the Count touched briefly again on the topic of the sword, merely to ask if Knighton could come and renew the mimic combat at the same hour on the following day. As a matter of course he included Professor Wildmann in the invitation. Everard accepted with pleasure; he was secretly very curious both about the Count and about the Count's resources in the art of fence. Wildmann followed the lead of Everard, with the proviso that he might have to make but a flying visit, as he had some work on hand for the next day but one, and had made it a rule never to work at night. In pursuit of which wise observance, he carried Knighton with him that night to the Opera Play House, where they saw a good all-round performance of the *Freischütz*, and went home well content to talk folklore and other matters, until Wildmann said: 'It seems to me it is time for bed, especially if you want to get the odd hits of *Marxil to-morrow*.'

'I'm not so very keen on that,' Everard answered; 'what does it matter in a casual trial of skill? But I do want to find out how much he was holding himself in to-day.'

'It comes to much the same thing,' replied Wildmann smiling, 'for to do that you will have to let yourself go more or less. I could see that neither of you was doing his best to-day. Well, good luck and good-night.' And with that they parted.

The next day, both having spent the morning in work, they joined forces at a modest luncheon, and proceeded at the appointed time to Marexil's rooms, whither Knighton had sent his flannels in advance. There they found the Count and his surroundings just as before, save that their host had rearranged matters so as to give somewhat more room for the coming assault. Thus, when, after a little talk and having got into flannels, they fell on guard, the Count and Knighton had each a clear space of a few yards between himself and the wall at his back.

At the beginning each played with an air of indifference which might have deceived an outsider, but in which Wildmann was quick enough to discern a wary and watchful attitude. As they warmed to their work thrust, lunge, parry, riposte all became quicker and closer, and the Professor could not but admire the lightness which Marexil displayed despite his corpulence, though he fancied that, as the assault progressed, the Count was hard put to it by the better staying power of his more slender antagonist, who was in perfect training. He noticed this specially, he thought, in a long and complicated phrase at the end of which the two fencers, by common consent, dropped their points, and removed their masks for a rest.

'You puzzled me finely, Count,' said Knighton, 'more than once. But you did not employ that famous parry and riposte again.'

'Ah! no!' answered Marexil with his Lablache chuckle, 'forewarned is forearmed. But that reminds me. You spoke yesterday, if I remember, of some wager which you had with our acquaintance, Mr. Manteuffel—a wager which never came to an end. Is it not so?'

Everard assented, and as he did so felt monstrously uncomfortable. The Count, however, continued with his ripple of joviality, 'Come, then, I will make you a sporting offer, and as I am handicapped by being "a tun of man" against your sparer frame—I know you have noticed that, Professor—I may indeed call it a very sporting offer. I do not ask you what was your wager

with that Manteuffel fellow—I prefer not to know. But I take it up from start to finish. I go it blind. What say you ?’

Here was a predicament for our Everard. His ‘wager,’ as he had loosely called it, with the fascinating but sinister personage known as Manteuffel, at Grison’s fencing-rooms, had amounted to neither more nor less than this—that Knighton, giving way to a bad habit since abjured, had, before the last three hits were called, exclaimed in a moment of enthusiasm and quotation, ‘May the devil fly away with me if I don’t get two out of the three.’

The enigmatic and disquieting Manteuffel caught him up, not for the first time, with some such words as: ‘Have a care, you might be taken at your word,’ and then they fenced (with the *épée*) for the last three hits. The assault was cut short by just such a doubtful accident mentioned by Everard in his letter above quoted as is familiar to lovers of folk-lore—and of the mysterious. That was all, but it had strangely perturbed more than one person besides Knighton, and he now felt as strangely perturbed at the ‘wager’ being suddenly taken up by this perhaps self-styled Count Tradioun von Marexil, who loved to compare himself with Falstaff. But what could Everard do ? He certainly could not tell the secret reason, or no reason, of his reluctance. That would be to write himself down an ass. He was saved from the appearance of more than a momentary hesitation—one can think and feel a good deal in a moment—by Wildmann chiming in with ‘A sporting offer indeed !’

‘And,’ said Knighton, with his pleasant smile, ‘I accept it in the name and the spirit of sport.’

‘Ah !’ cried Marexil, ‘that is well. I love sport. But, I am not yet quite ready for the famous three hits, though I dare say my formidable antagonist is quite prepared. Will he not forgive me, and join me in a cigarette—we must not dally over pipes—and you, Professor ? I can recommend my cigarettes. They are sent me direct by a special friend. The flavour is peculiar, but, I think, as the English said in the eighteenth century, you will taste it.’

As Marexil got up to proffer a box of cigarettes standing on a side table, there came a knock at the door, followed by the entrance of a *famulus* with a note for Wildmann, who, with a request for permission, opened it and said : ‘How tiresome ! My chief wants to see me at once—his note has followed me here ; but, though pressing, it is a matter easily settled, and I hope to be back before the end of the encounter. *Prosit* to both of you, if that may be !’ And so he and the *famulus* disappeared.

The Count and his guest lighted their cigarettes and smoked silently for a brief space. Then Knighton said: 'The flavour is peculiar; but I think it is attractive. I do not remember anything quite like it.'

'No?' answered the Count, 'well, they are not in the market, and the friend who sends them to me is rather mysterious about them. You have finished? Shall we try conclusions, then?'

Now, whether the cigarettes were 'loaded' or not, I do not presume to say; but it is a well-known fact that certain drugs act in the most curious way on different people. What, for instance, will make A. lethargic will give singular alertness of perception and action, for a time at least, to B. And sure it is that when Marexil and Knighton had put the ends of their cigarettes in an ash-tray, donned masks, taken up foils, and stood up against each other, Knighton had never felt in better form than he did at that moment. Nevertheless, in the very first phrase of the assault, his opponent scored one, because the Englishman, in an impetuous advance, tripped over a crack in the floor and stumbled forward on to the Count's outstretched point. 'An accident,' cried the Count readily and pleasantly; 'we must not mark that.'

'Oh! Yes!' rejoined Everard, 'one must pay for carelessness,' and to it they went again. Now Knighton held himself on the defensive, drew an attack from the other exactly as he designed, and met it with a brilliant parry and riposte, which, however, was in turn parried, though only just in time and without a riposte. The phrase ended here, but as they resumed Knighton thought he perceived that his opponent was beginning to get a trifle winded. With every faculty strung up to the utmost, he, all in a moment, planned and executed another stratagem. He feigned slight exhaustion himself, retreated ever so slightly, received Marexil's too confident advance and attack with the old-fashioned, but sometimes very effective, device of the backward lunge, and in a twinkling had scored one against the Count's one.

Now came the crisis. Everard, still with a strange exhilaration of mind and body, the moment they crossed blades, attacked the other so swiftly, and with such mastery, that Marexil, whose breathing was now certainly affected, after some excellent parries and well-met ripostes, began slowly but steadily to break ground, Knighton pressed him hotly, and more hotly yet, until there seemed to be scarce a yard between his adversary's bulk and the wall at his back. The second hit he thought was all but won. Again a plan, this time of quick disconcerting attack, flashed upon him.

Every fibre was ready to execute it; there was now not a foot between the Count and the wall, when, suddenly, as it seemed to Everard, Marexil's outstretched point changed to a long bright funnel, from which poured forth straight into his face, through the meshes of the mask, a cloud of vapour, blinding, bewildering, disabling. He reeled and knew nothing more until he found himself lying back in a chair with Marexil on one side of him and Wildmann on the other, the latter feeling his pulse, and the former proffering a ready-charged goblet of champagne, which the Englishman was glad enough to accept. Under its influence he came quickly to himself, and then Marexil uttered a quantity of congratulations and apologies with a note of concern in his jovial voice. Could it be that the peculiar tobacco had caused the distinguished Englishman's sudden faintness? He had been only just in time, when he saw his opponent stagger, to rush forward, catch him, and support him to a chair, and just at that moment Professor Wildmann had come in, and between them they had done all they could for his restoration.

'Thanks, ever so much, to both of you,' were the first clear and articulate words that Knighton uttered. Then he rose slowly, shook himself dog-fashion, straightened himself up, and declared that he was his own man again. 'So all is well,' said the Count, with his broad face one smile of relief and satisfaction; 'one tiny tumbler more of Heidsieck just to celebrate a recovery as quick as your attack, and I may use the last words in a double sense, for there's no denying you pressed me hard. So—,' he suited the action to the word. 'Professor, you will join us? To our next merry meeting!'

Everard, as he looked at Marexil while they drank the toast, thought there was a gleam in his eyes best described by the word *goguenard*.

As Wildmann and Knighton walked away, the Professor said: 'I wish I had been there to see the assault, and more still, to help you when that queer faintness first seized you. I am something of a toxicologist, and I asked Marexil if I might have one of the cigarettes to analyse. He handed me the box, but it was empty.'

'Odd,' said Everard; 'I thought it was full. But the cigarette had nothing to do with it—nothing whatever.'

There was just a hint of irritation in his tone; but even that hint was so unusual with him, that Wildmann, like a wise man, replied only: 'No, I suppose not,' and quickly turned the current of talk.

Next morning, both the Professor and the Englishman received

courteous notes from Marexil, explaining and deploring his being suddenly called away on important business.

Meanwhile, Everard had written to his sweetheart, Viola Torrens, a full account, as colourless as he could make it, of what had come of his encounter with Marexil. At the end, he wrote : ' I wonder if you will jeer at me for a German-fantasy-ridden idiot. But I cannot help connecting this with our Manteuffel experience. Nor can I shake off the idea that—the words seem nonsense as I begin to write them—the only reason why the Count was so hard pressed by me was that he had forgotten to what extent he was hampered by his disguise, get-up, how shall I phrase it ? Besides, where did he get his peculiar name ? Perhaps it will flash upon you at once, though the memory came to me only after I reached my rooms after leaving him, and his toast to our next merry meeting. Do not laugh at me too much when you answer.'

' No,' said Viola to herself, when she had read the letter twice, ' I may laugh at you just enough, but certainly not too much. As for the name, the words that make it up seem to start a memory—but of what ? Doubtless it will come to me. But, my dear one, as to merry meetings, I shall certainly lay my strictest commands on you to have no further dealings with strange swordsmen until—well, until you have someone with you who will always have a wary eye on you.'

The next day a friend of Viola's, musical like herself, came to call. While they were talking Viola cried, ' A memory that escaped me yesterday has suddenly appeared—forgive me.' She sat down and played. ' Now,' she said, ' that is the memory. What is the music ?'

' Why,' replied the other ; ' you cannot really have forgotten the fiends' chorus at the end of Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust* ?'

' No,' said Viola, thoughtfully ; ' I suppose I had not really forgotten, but I wanted to be sure.'

W. H. POLLOCK.

The Story of a Struggle.

BY PAUL FOUNTAIN,

Author of 'The Great Deserts and Forests of North America,' &c.

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST LONG TRAMP.

MY purpose of leaving home was not shaken in the least, only I determined to be more cautious next time, and leave no trace by which I could be followed. I began to save up all the pocket-money which came into my possession, which was not much, for I had long since been deprived of the guinea-pigs. To raise funds I sold some books and other things, but the largest sum I could scrape together was only about a pound. This I kept hid about my person in sixpences, for I knew that I must make it last as long as possible, and determined to use it carefully, sixpence at a time. I also collected a few necessaries, which I tied into a handkerchief bundle, in imitation of the sailor-boy I had met at Gloucester.

I was always thinking about this boy and wondering if I should ever meet him again. I intended to make for Shields, and hoped that I should see him there. How far Shields was from Cheltenham I did not know; but I knew that it must be a very long way, and that it lay to the northward. I was afraid to make many inquiries lest I should arouse suspicion of my intended flight. More than once I heard persons say that Liverpool was the best place of departure for America; but boys are strange animals, and although I learned that it was much nearer than Shields, to Shields I was resolved to go.

¶ It was in the early spring when I ran away to Gloucester.

Fourteen months elapsed, and it was the month of June of the following year when I started for Shields. I had grown much, and greatly increased in strength, in that interval, and had continuously practised myself in walking, so that I scouted the idea of fatigue. I had also learned the sword exercise from a sergeant of Yeomanry, a little scientific boxing from a man who kept a gymnasium, and other equally useful accomplishments for the benefit of the Red Indians, whom I always imagined were to be irreconcilable enemies, until I actually arrived in America and discovered how much they differed in disposition from their portraits as sketched in story-books.

I deliberately chose the time of flight so that I might have long summer days for my journey; and I had provided myself with a small map of England, and another of America, torn out of a school atlas. These were little better than waste paper, for they showed no roads, and only the larger towns; but the one enabled me to shape my way roughly to the north.

My father's house was at Cudnall (Charlton Kings), a mile south of Cheltenham, so that I had to go the whole length of the street of the town, which is not less than three miles long. I started about four o'clock in the morning, having made the excuse that I was going to spend the day at Seven Springs, and on the Leckhampton Hills, which I often did. Instead of turning up the Cirencester Road, however, I kept straight on down the High Street, sneaking rapidly past my uncle's shops and other houses where I was known, with much the shame-faced feeling as a thief, and not at all the more comfortable because the streets were deserted and the window-blinds all drawn close. I met one or two policemen and an old sergeant, and attracted their attention by trying to avoid them. One of them shouted, 'Hullo, young man! Where are you off to?' He compelled me to stop and questioned me; and I am sorry to say that I told him a round of well-invented lies. After he had examined my bundle he permitted me to go, and as soon as I was well out on the Tewkesbury Road I walked with all my might, anxious to get from the vicinity of policemen as speedily as possible.

I reached Tewkesbury about six o'clock, but I escaped notice as an early arrival here owing to the fact that preparations were in progress for a country *fête*, and a brass band was already parading the streets, followed by a crowd of children and young persons. I hurried on, and about midday reached Worcester, where I ventured to enter a public-house and had some bread and cheese and

a glass of ale. This cost fourpence of my first sixpenny-piece, and I resolved not to indulge in such luxuries in future, as I foresaw that at such an extravagant rate of expenditure I should not be able to make my eighteen or nineteen shillings last all the way to Shields. I thought that I should be at least a month on the journey.

On sitting down at Worcester I felt a little tired, and soon began to get stiff; but as I thought that my prolonged rest attracted the attention of the people of the house I soon started again, and walking more slowly reached Droitwich. I was then so tired that I got through a hedge and lay down in a copse. But I could not sleep, and felt so lonely and restless that I got up and resumed walking while it was yet light. I could not go much further. My feet became sore and the irons galled me. I got some distance past a big factory or warehouse to a spot where the road was very lonely; then I climbed into a field, and lay down in a shed which was intended, I think, as a shelter for cattle, for there was a rubbing-post close to it. But I could not sleep, and remained in a fidgety and disturbed state through the short night. It was daylight again soon after three o'clock, and I got up and resumed my journey. In about a couple of miles walk I came to a hamlet, and obtained some milk from a man who was loading a cart, and who obligingly fetched me part of a loaf from his house, for none of the shops were yet open. He asked a great many questions, and I told some more lies. Thinking of this wickedness as I walked along I became so ashamed of myself that I resolved I would be guilty of the sin no more; and to avoid being questioned I did not, for a long time, stop to rest in a village, but always went into a wood or a field for that purpose.

Soon after quitting the hamlet, the name of which I forget, I saw a wagon, piled high with small round baskets, coming on behind, and it occurred to me to ask the driver to give me a lift. He was sitting on the shaft asleep, but awoke at my shout and stopped the cart. He readily gave me permission to ride on the other shaft, and as soon as I was up fell asleep again, the horses, who evidently knew the road, jogging on at a foot pace. The wagon was laden with strawberries destined for Birmingham, and we arrived there in time for early market. By that time I was so painfully hungry that I entered an eating-house, and recklessly indulged in lavish expenditure, having a luxurious breakfast of coffee, bacon, and eggs, with bread and butter to finish with; and in the street I purchased a pottle of the straw-

berries, which had doubtless arrived in the town with me, the delicious smell of the fruit on the ride up having provoked a longing which I could not control.

Birmingham struck me as being a dreadful place. From childhood I have entertained a horror of big towns ; and Birmingham was the dirtiest and noisiest I had yet seen ; moreover, I could not frame my lips to pronounce the name aright, and was obliged to call it ' Brummyghum.' It seemed to me to be more of a wilderness than London itself ; there certainly were not so many attractions, and I soon got lost. I was most jealous of saying where I wanted to go, lest I should be traced, and in my endeavours to get clear of the houses and out into the open country I found myself sometimes at Moseley, and then in succession at Aston, Camphill, Handsworth and Smethwick—so I was told in reply to inquiries as to where I was. The first night I was so utterly exhausted that I was compelled to hire a bed at a small coffee-house, and there I slept, without a turn, until midday. The people here suspected something wrong ; but I was resolute not to tell them anything, except that I was seeking employment, which was the truth. They recommended me to go to some fancy toy warehouse, where they thought I could get employment as a ' stamper ' ; and charged me only eighteenpence for my bed and breakfast. But this seemed so great a sum to me that I remember crying when I got into the street at the rapid decrease of my money.

I wandered about the streets all day without anything to eat till nightfall, when I bought a penny loaf. Long after dark I went up an entry and crept under a cart. Here I slept longer than I had intended, for I was surprised in the morning by a young man who swore dreadfully, and threatened to throw a bucket of water over me if I did not look sharp and ' push it.' I went away and had another loaf and a pennyworth of milk for breakfast. Later in the day I found myself in front of the barracks, and stopped to peep in and view the very fine cavalry soldiers, dressed in bearskin caps like the Grenadiers—the Scots Greys, as I presently learned.

How much bigger my heart was than my body, and how little I realised what a fight life is, may be judged when I tell that I suddenly resolved to enlist into this regiment of giants. (They were very big men at this time.) So, stretching myself up to appear as tall as possible, and assuming what I thought was a military swagger, I strutted through the gate, and was promptly stopped by the sentry, who asked what I wanted. I told him that I was

going to enlist. For a moment he seemed dumbfounded with astonishment; then he laughed so loudly that a sergeant looked out of the guard-room, and asked what was the matter. The sentry, still laughing, said that it was a recruit, and the sergeant came out to look at me. He was a grave man, a very typical Scotchman, and did not laugh. He said I was much too small for 'The Greys,' but that I was a fine laddie and perhaps the infantry at Sheffield would take me. 'But what's the matter with your leg; has it been broken?' he continued, noticing the stiffness of my gait. Then I told him that I was a cripple, and wore irons; and he said (what, indeed, for the moment I had forgotten) that I was no good for the army. With a rueful feeling I turned to go.

'Wait a wee,' said the sergeant. 'Who are you, and where do you come from, and what's the matter with you?'

There was something in the man's eye that captured me, and I told him a great deal more than I had intended to tell any stranger.

There was an officer looking out at the window of a block of buildings which stood facing the gate and not far from it.

'Is that Captain ——?' (I forget the name) asked the sergeant.

'No; it is Captain ——,' replied the sentry.

'Oh, he's all right,' commented the sergeant. 'Come into the guard-room and tell me all about it'; and, taking me kindly by the arm, he led me into that building, where there was a delicious smell of Irish stew or some such mess. I devoutly hoped that he would ask me to partake of this tempting fare; and surely enough, almost his first words were:

'Wull ye tak a bit o' dinner, laddie?' as nearly as I can imitate his brogue, which was not, however, very broad.

With boyish freedom from affectation or false modesty, I said that that was just what I wanted; and in two minutes I was deeply engaged with what seemed to me the most delicious basin of soup I had ever eaten.

When I had finished the heartiest meal I had eaten since leaving home, I told the soldiers my history, including all I thought in my boyish mind, and how I was determined to work my way to America. At this the sergeant shook his head and said I had better go back to my mother, whom he expected was by this time 'in a fine way about me.'

This reference to my mother, of whom I have always been exceedingly fond, completely upset me, and I had a violent fit of crying, for I was worn out by this time. The soldiers remained very quiet, and let me have my cry out, which was probably the

wisest course, as expressed sympathy would have tended to still more unman me. Two or three of them began to accoutre themselves, for it was now nearly six o'clock in the evening, and they were preparing to go off duty. One of these men said that he had 'a bad father himself, who was always licking his mother, and he knew what it was.' Addressing this man, the sergeant said, 'There's a spare bed in your room, isn't there, Robertson? Come back and fetch the laddie. If Smith' (who proved to be the non-commissioned officer in charge of the room) 'says anything, tell him that the lad is a friend of mine.' Robertson promised that he would do so, and, going outside with his comrades, went through some ceremony of 'porting arms' with the new guard, which had just marched up. The old guard then marched away, and in about ten minutes time Robertson, having got rid of his belts and carbine, came back and conducted me to his room, which was a plain whitewashed one, with rough tables and forms for furniture, and about a dozen truck beds arranged against the walls. One of these I was told I might occupy for the night, and Mr. Robertson, having drunk his tea, went to the canteen for a quart of ale and some tobacco 'to make himself comfortable,' as he termed it, as he did not intend to go out of barracks that night. An old soldier who sat in his shirt-sleeves volunteered to help him drink the ale, and they produced an old pack of cards and played twenty-fives for a farthing a game. All the other soldiers in the room 'sweetened themselves up,' and went out to spend the evening in the town.

Robertson and the old soldier, whom he called Bob, had a weakness for beer, for they fetched several other quarts, and when I went to bed, which I did rather early, they were both nearly tipsy, and rather disposed to be quarrelsome with each other. I was dog tired, and fell asleep immediately; and the soldiers must have come home very quietly, or I was too exhausted to be disturbed, for I did not awake until I was aroused by the blare of a trumpet early next morning. It was broad daylight, and the soldiers bustled about, getting breakfast and brushing their coats, for there was to be a parade that morning.

Immediately after breakfast Sergeant Kennedy came to inquire for me, and gave me renewed advice to go back to my mother. In bidding me good-bye he slipped a shilling into my hand. I refused to take it, but the sergeant forced it into my pocket, and went with me as far as the barrack-gate. I have not forgotten his name or that of Robertson, nor their fine manly appearance,

and when I cease to do so I shall be taking a longer rest than that which was broken by the trumpet of the Scots Greys.

Good food and good rest had much revived me, and I was in better spirits that day. I never once seriously thought of returning home. My nature is obstinate or determined, I cannot decide which, and I have never voluntarily turned back from any course I have deliberately taken. So when I came to a quiet corner I took out my map, already much broken and frayed, and looked out Sheffield, that had been mentioned by the sergeant. As I found that it was almost due north of Birmingham, I determined to go there next, and inquired what road I should take.

The road, at least the first part of it, was so dreadful in my opinion that I was nearly frightened into abandoning my intention and taking some other route. But I was told by a passer-by, whom I stopped, that all the country thereabout was similar to that to which I so much objected.

First there was mile after mile of dingy smoke-discoloured houses with dirty women and children standing about the doors; and at frequent intervals huge factories, into the basements of which I could look, and see the foundry-men at work, standing in the very flames, as it seemed to me. I thought it was an awful sight; and then, after passing through Wednesbury and Walsall, and many places of which I have forgotten the names, if I ever knew them, I came to what ought to have been the open country, and found the ground covered with huge heaps of cinders and slag, so that I wandered many miles, and the only green thing which I saw was a heap of refuse from a chemical-works. I was horrified, and wondered if this place was like hell, and if God were angry with me for running away from home. At night, when it grew dark, the whole country was ablaze with lurid glares and shooting reflections, which increased my horror of soul. If I could have seen any part where it was dark I should have made for that point; but I was encircled by a complete ring of glowing incandescence and actual flame, a thousand times worse to look upon than any volcanic tract I have since seen. Some of the enormous cinder-heaps were burning, and a man whom I accosted said that one heap, which he pointed out, had been burning, or smouldering, since he was a boy more than thirty years previously. It made such an impression on my young mind that though I have never been near this country since, and it is fully forty years ago that I am writing of, I can still vividly picture it as if it were seen but yesterday.

I slept on a cinder-heap that night; and before sleeping I prayed to God, the first time I had done so since leaving home.

I reached Sheffield late on the third day from Birmingham. From this point the recollections of the incidents of my journey are not all so clear as are those of the first part of my wanderings. I remember, however, that I had no food during these three days, except bread and an occasional pennyworth of milk, and that I expended less than a shilling. I was alarmed at the rapid decrease of my money, which was already half gone. When near Sheffield I went into a field and took two turnips, which did not agree with me, and made me very ill. But I did not suffer so much from want of food as might be imagined. The weather was intensely hot, and I suffered cruelly from thirst. I had no drink but water, which I begged—the only thing I did beg for—from the houses I passed. I could not get as much as I wanted, and was cautioned by more than one old woman for drinking water so freely. Sometimes I got a draught from a stream near the road, but most of the brooks were polluted by the discharges from the factories.

Sheffield lies in a hollow, and my first glimpse of it was obscured by a kind of a black mist which hung low down and immediately over it. I was surprised, therefore, on entering the streets to find it the cleanest and altogether the handsomest town I had passed through. I did not stop in Sheffield, but slept in a hovel in the suburbs. Next morning I felt so poorly—the result of the turnip feast—that I indulged in a pint of tea and some delicious home-baked bread and butter. This was at a poor eating-house, the people at which were inquisitive; and I again, in spite of my good resolutions, told some dreadful fibs, in order to avoid telling the honest truth.

I said that I was going to friends at Shields, and mentioned that I thought the way (according to my map) lay through Wakefield and Leeds. Acting on the advice of the coffee-house keeper, however, I went through Doncaster and York. The road, for a time, was very hilly in this district, and I got some bad blisters on my feet, so that I could only limp along, and was quite a week in reaching York. From York to Darlington I rode most of the distance through the kindness of an obliging wagoner, and an old farmer, who took me from near Northallerton right into Darlington. Here, to my joy, I learned that I was only thirty-six miles from Shields.

But, as often happens in the whole course of life, when almost within sight of the goal we break down. So it happened to me.

I was so ill when I reached Darlington that it took me all day to hobble to the village of Aycliffe, a distance of only four or five miles. I knew that I wanted proper rest in a bed, and hoped that would set me right; so when I saw a ticket in a cottage window, 'Lodgings for a single man,' I knocked at the door. The woman hesitated to let me in; but on receiving a shilling in advance I was permitted to go to bed in a little room which was a picture of snowy cleanliness.

I was not myself in a particularly respectable condition as regards outward appearance. My clothes had suffered much from my sleeping in them, and for want of brushing; and I was in a deplorable state of dirt generally. I had a spare shirt with me, but this had not been properly washed since I left home. I had done my best, once or twice, to 'rub it out' at wayside brooks and ditches, but the result, as far as the dirt was concerned, was to rub it in. I quite forgot that it is usual in washing linen to use soap.

The rest in a decent bed was so delightful that I felt I should like to remain in it for a whole week. The next morning I was too ill to get up. The woman sent her husband up to me, and he was somewhat surly. However, on my paying two shillings more, and assuring him that another night's rest would put me right, I was permitted to remain in bed all day and until the following morning. They also sent me some breakfast, but I could not eat it, although I drank the tea.

I could not get up that day either, and the people of the house became impatient. They put many questions to me which I did not care to answer, and by-and-by the man came to my room with two other men—his chums. They tried alternately to persuade or frighten me into telling who I was, and where I came from. They also searched the pockets of my clothes, but found nothing except the usual contents of a boy's pockets, and two shillings and ninepence—all the money I had left. When leaving the room the master of the house told me that if I did not give the address of my friends so that he might write to them, he would send for the police to take me to the workhouse.

This threat so much frightened me that I made a desperate effort, shuffled on my clothes, and staggered out of the house. As I passed through the doorway the fellow said that he thought I was a deceitful young scamp, and deserved a good horse-whipping. I made off out of the village as fast as I could; but I soon collapsed and lay under a hedge all that night.

All I remember of the next two days is that they were days of extreme misery. I had some milk two or three times and bought a loaf, but how cautiously I spent money is shown by the fact that when I reached Shields I had still two shillings and fourpence in my possession.

From the time of starting I had not kept any reckoning of the time, or attempted to, so that I did not know the day of the month. Subsequently I knew that it was the 18th of July when I entered Shields, which was the thirty-third day since my leaving Cheltenham. The total amount of money I had had in possession during that time was nineteen shillings and eightpence, including Sergeant Kennedy's shilling; so it is not surprising that when I arrived at Shields I was reduced to skin and bone. The soles of my shoes lasted so far, but as I entered the streets of the coast town one of them dropped off, and I stood some minutes in silent despair looking at it as I held it in my hand. Then I put it in my pocket, hoping I might be able to sew it on by-and-by, and when I met a man who looked like a sailor I inquired the way to the docks.

CHAPTER III.

WESTWARD OH!

ALTHOUGH I felt very ill, as the result of over-exertion and starvation no doubt, I soon recovered after reaching Shields. I spent two days lurking about the docks and wharves, but could not find any ship bound to America. I was repeatedly told that I should have done better to have gone to Liverpool. Most of the ships I applied to were engaged in the Baltic trade. Some of them had a great square hole (port perhaps) cut in the head or bow; and men, working like horses, were discharging heavy beams through it by means of chains and windlasses. I thought that I could assist by removing the planks which formed the deck loads, but I scarcely got a civil answer to my applications for work, and in any case was always refused.

I now lived to some small extent by rule, if I may so say of my poor efforts to do right and keep straight. Fruit was cheap, and I had two-pennyworth each day. I also bought a twopenny loaf, which I cut in half, making it last two days. So my living cost threepence a day, and I was half starved, always feeling ravenously

hungry. When my money came down to a few pence, which was in a week's time, I had to do without the fruit. At night I slept in any quiet nook or corner I could find, and more than once narrowly escaped getting into trouble with the stern police in consequence of being found homeless.

Finding that I could not get employment about the docks, I turned my attention to the tradesmen in the town. Here, once or twice, I was employed by a greengrocer, who considered sixpence a sufficient reward for running about with him all day. He did, however, give me a pair of old boots, of which I was sadly in need, and also a little of the stale fruit which he would otherwise have had to throw away.

Altogether I was about three weeks in Shields, living in this manner, and never once sleeping in a bed. Of course I became deplorably dirty and neglected, though I did my best to keep clean. I stuck fast to my spare shirt and a piece of comb which I used daily. My custom was to go frequently to a stream or creek which runs through Jarrow, and which was very quiet in the early morning. Here I bathed and rinsed my linen, which, of course, was by this time as yellow as a guinea for want of soap. In this way I at least kept myself from becoming positively offensive. My clothes were quite ragged now.

I was continually on the look-out for the boy I had met at Gloucester station, but I never saw him. It would have been a remarkable meeting if I had. I made some slight acquaintance with another boy, however, the son of a waterman engaged on the river; and this lad sometimes, when his father was not about, would pull me across to North Shields, and I visited Tynemouth in search of a ship. Occasionally I would have to remain on this side of the river for several days at a time, until I had an opportunity of returning with my friend. It was at Tynemouth that my escapade came to an end. For the boy I have mentioned, after having in vain endeavoured to find a billet for me on board a 'keel' or barge, said one day that he knew of a captain of a ketch who wanted a boy, and he obtained the permission of his father to pull me over to this ship.

She was a small schooner called the *Good Providence*, and was lying heeled over to undergo a painting and some repairs. The captain was a rough sailor, who worked much like one of his crew; for the vessel was only a coaster, bound to Sunderland her next voyage, if the journey can be dignified by that name; for Sunderland is almost within sight, some six or seven miles distant.

Still, here was an opportunity of earning honest bread, and I gladly closed with the man's offer to become the deck slave and drudge of this magnificent craft; my idea being that I should become a sailor, and then have no difficulty in shipping for America.

I was rather disenchanted that first day. There were only two men on board besides the captain, and I was put to work which I was not strong enough to perform, and there were some dreadful threats hurled at me, of which 'warming my ear-hole' was a long way the mildest. When I said that I was weak because I had not had enough to eat, one of the men told the captain and the other man to let 'the poor little beggar alone'; and at lunch time he took me ashore to a public-house, where we sat down to a repast of ale and cold boiled pork and bread and raw onions, the provisions having been brought from home in my companion's pocket-handkerchief. That did not trouble me, and I wished there had been more of it.

During the afternoon the men were not so rough. They probably saw that I was willing and doing my best. At night my 'chummy,' as the others called the man who had favoured me, asked where I lodged. I told him that I slept in the street; so he took me home with him, saying that he feared his missus couldn't give me a bed, because they had such a lot of young 'uns, but I should have a shake-down of some sort.

I do not know this good fellow's name. They called him 'Bummer' on board the *Good Providence*; but when I addressed him as 'Mr. Bummer' the other two laughed, and he did not seem to relish it, and told me to call him Sam. This I, of course, did, and these are the only two names by which he lives in my memory. Mrs. Sam then was a right good-hearted motherly woman. She did not seem very young, but she had an infant at the breast, and eight other 'young 'uns' sprawling about the brick-laid floor of their little house—I cannot call it a cottage, for it was small, cramped, and in a most awful neighbourhood. Poor thing! She mentioned that 'Sam's wages is only three pound ten a month and his findings, and 'Liza Jane ain't old enough to look after the house and let me go out and work much.'

The shake-down consisted of two chairs and a quilt; but what was of more importance to me was the hearty tea I made, although this consisted only of bread and dripping and radishes. Ah! I have heard fellows since say that they cannot eat this and cannot eat that; I think I could find them a sauce that would make them feel they could eat a coal-scuttle.

Well, Sam and I were up before the missus and the young 'uns, and Sam ran out and fetched two rashers and four eggs for our breakfast ; and if it is thought that I have a remarkable memory for trifles, I may say that these *trifles* probably made more impression on my mind than the transfers of kingdoms do on the mental faculties of some potentates.

We were due at the ship at six o'clock, and it was about half-past five when we started on the two-mile walk to where she lay. Half that distance had been covered when my attention was attracted by a policeman on the other side of the road. He kept pace with us, and incessantly peeped at us, yet without seeming to wish to attract our attention.

'What does that man want?' I inquired of Sam.

'Blest if I know,' he replied. 'Wants a job, perhaps.'

The policeman, seeing he was noticed, immediately came across the road.

'Is your name J. P. F.?' he asked, addressing me.

I was so dumbfounded that I could not answer him, while poor Sam's countenance fell, and he glanced suspiciously, first at me and then at the policeman. The latter, seeing my confusion, was evidently quite satisfied that he had not made a mistake.

'You will have to come with me,' he said, laying his hand on my shoulder.

'I hope he ain't a-been doing nothing,' said Sam in such a tone and manner as showed how deeply hurt he would have been if he had learned that I was an evil-doer.

'No, I have not,' I blurted out. 'Sam, I have never done a wrong act in my life, and this man has no right to meddle with me.'

Sam was immediately convinced.

'Look here, you've made a mistake,' he said to the policeman. 'I'm sure he's a good lad, and ain't done nothing wrong.'

'I don't say he has,' replied the policeman; 'but he has run away from home, and we've the authority of his friends to detain him.'

Sam asked if this were true, and I was compelled to admit that it was.

'Well, I thought he'd the makings of a young gentleman about him,' said Sam. 'Here! I'll go bail for him.'

The policeman shook his head at this proposal, and said Sam would have to talk to the inspector about that, and accordingly we all went to the police-station together.

The inspector was a kind man, and after comparing me with a printed description he held in his hand, and putting a number of questions, which I saw it would do no good to refuse to answer, he said in reply to Sam's offer of bail that he thought I should be better off at the station until my friends fetched me.

'I don't know as how it's lawful for you to keep him, since he ain't done nothing,' said Sam, who was loth to go without me.

'Oh, yes! We can charge him, if necessary, with wandering without visible means of subsistence,' said the inspector.

'Oh! I hope you won't do that,' I exclaimed, frightened at the idea of having any sort of police charge made against me.

'I don't think it will be necessary if you remain here quiet,' said the inspector. 'Your friends say that you are to be detained until they are communicated with. You are only a youngster, you know, and not your own master.'

I would rather have gone with Sam, but the inspector was inexorable; so I shook hands with my friend, and I never saw him again.

The police were kind enough, and listened with interest to my adventures, which, somehow, they induced me to tell. At twelve o'clock I had a good dinner of baked meat and potatoes with greens, and again a good tea, so that I began to feel more like my old self than I had done for a long time past. At night I went home with a policeman who had volunteered to find a bed for me, and who carefully locked me in my room; but I harboured no intention of attempting to escape. I was worn out and felt that I should not be able to get to America until I was older and stronger.

It seems that Uncle Jack had had circulars printed, giving a description of me, and sent them to many of the police-stations throughout the country, especially in seaport towns; for it was thought that I would attempt to get to America. I had been traced as far as Birmingham, but there the track was lost. My movements in that great town had escaped notice.

Next morning I was taken back to the police-station by my entertainer, and there left; and not long after Uncle George, my aunt's husband, came, having travelled all night. He was shocked to see the state I was in, so no doubt I bore strong traces of the scenes I had gone through. He took me, after paying the police expenses, to get a new suit of clothes, and prepared to return to Cheltenham at once. However, I persuaded him to take me to bid Mrs. Sam good-bye, and he gave her half a sovereign for her kindness to me, which the poor woman said was a God-send to

her. I was sorry that Sam was not home, for I wanted to see him again.

I was glad that Uncle George had come to fetch me home, rather than Jack, whom I held in great awe, partly on account of his six feet five, but more particularly owing to his grave, stern manner. I could do or say anything with George, who was never known to be in a bad temper with anyone. He remonstrated with me a little for running away ; but with him it had all blown over and been forgotten in five minutes.

Again he had a long night journey, for we left Shields late the same afternoon ; and the road it had taken me a month to traverse was passed over in some twelve or fourteen hours. All anger was lost in joy at my safe return ; but I was taken in hand by Jack to be reasoned with.

Jack was a good man, and I am sure he felt for me and sympathised with my desire to be doing something for myself. He told me that if I would be patient and listen to advice something would be done for me, since it was evident that my father did not care what became of me ; that I was too young yet to go to America, but that in due time I should be sent out in a proper way.

There was already a cousin, a much older man than I, settled in Ottawa, and prospering in business, and it was thought that I might go to him ; but Jack required that I should put myself on good behaviour for twelve months first. This was an inducement to strive, and I made a great effort to do that which should be pleasing to my friends.

About this time my father began to manage a theatrical company, and to resume his wandering about the country, dragging me with him as money-taker to the places of entertainment where he performed. This life was revolting to me in the highest degree, and I wrote to my favourite uncle George to beg him to hurry on the promised help. The result was that he and my grandmother between them found 250*l.* to give me a start in life. As I was so young the bulk of the money was sent out to Cousin S—— T——, or Stain, as I will call him, to be expended under his control ; and as I wish to hurry over my story I may say that I justified the confidence reposed in me by paying back every farthing of the money before I was twenty years of age. That is a boast ; but I am surely entitled to make it, and it is uttered in an honourable spirit.

At my own earnest wish—for I love the sea—I was sent out in

a sailing vessel, and after a tedious and boisterous passage of nearly two months, on account of adverse winds, I landed on the shores of the New World while I still wanted several weeks to complete my sixteenth year.

I did not get on very well with Stain. He was a good fellow enough, but soft, yet obstinate, and had no sympathy with backwoods roving and fur-hunting—occupations I was mad to be engaged in. So, after we had quarrelled a little, he handed over most of my money to my own control, glad enough, I dare say, to be rid of me, and I marched off to see the wilds of Canada, thinking to settle down ultimately to farming, with shooting and trapping to figure largely as recreations. But this was not my destiny.

An International Complication.

WHEN the three pretty, portionless Blumenthals first started their school in the *Taubenstrasse*, they aroused more gossip than confidence, and their path was set with pitfalls. But fifteen years had changed all that.

The men remarked no longer, to their women folk, on the Blumenthal complexions, and if they had the women folk would have laughed, for most of them now had been pupils, and had formed their impression of the sisters at an age when everybody over eighteen is unthinkably old.

Time, too, had emphasised the qualities of Anna, the eldest. There was nobody like her for conducting a victorious campaign in the hill-country of knowledge. Her pig-tailed regiments adored her, and she enjoyed her arduous life. It was only in the holidays that her world sometimes seemed small, and that she longed for bigger ones to conquer.

The summer vacation after her sisters married was the most trying she had yet faced. The outlook was dauntingly tranquil.

Patricia Warren, the parlour boarder, whom she had invited to stay on as her guest, did not need suppressing when there was no one to incite or shock; and the French governess, who had invited herself because she was interested in a tobacconist in the town, was also harmless when there were no sharp young eyes about to speculate on her cosmetics.

So it was with genuine eagerness that Anna offered to saddle herself with Patricia's brother Harry.

Patricia had looked savage one morning.

'It's beastly hard on Uncle Dick,' she explained. 'He's dying to have Harry under fire. He'd feel he was doing something for his country, don't you know? And the wretched boy has gone and got ploughed again.'

'Bring him here,' proposed Anna. 'We'll try him with our German methods.'

She knew all about Patricia's Uncle Dick. As he was the one subject Patricia talked of seriously, he was apt to impress her listeners. The gallant soldier who, in his first campaign, had won his V.C. at the cost of his right arm and a permanently crippling attack of rheumatic fever, had stirred Anna's enthusiasm and pity. She respected him, too, for having remained a bachelor that his orphaned nephew and niece might have all his money and affection.

'But for that bullet,' Patricia had sighed, 'he'd have been a world-famed hero. Since then he's sacrificed everything for us, and now he doesn't even look for a return. Here am I, indulging my fancy for music, instead of nursing and cheering him. And there's Harry, quite contented to be a duffer. I wish you knew Uncle Dick. You would love him—simply *love* him.'

Perhaps to test the truth of the prophecy, Anna offered to invite Captain Warren too.

But Patricia regretted that it would be of no use, as her uncle was not strong enough to travel. 'Not for pleasure,' she added. 'For duty, of course, he would set out for the moon to-morrow.'

So Harry came alone.

'Fräulein Anna wills that I teach your brother French, although it is my right, at present, to repose myself,' Mademoiselle grumbled to Patricia on the eve of his arrival. 'What age has, then, this Harry?'

'Not one that implicates the proprieties, I'm afraid,' was the malicious answer.

'He is a little boy? *Tant pis!* They are so tiresome!'

So next day Mademoiselle ran down to the twelve-o'clock breakfast with her hair out of curl, and when she was introduced to a colossal boy of twenty, whose exterior brought him well within the range of feminine guns, her glance at Patricia was not pleasant, although Patricia enjoyed it.

When she next appeared it was in fighting form, and no Vickers-Maxim or Nordenfelt could have attempted deadlier work than her eyes.

'That cat means mischief; I'll have to watch her,' thought Patricia; and having decided to stick to Harry like a leech, she got Anna's permission to go off the following day on a sketching tour with some friends.

'Now that cat's gone, I'll enjoy myself,' thought Mademoiselle; and she met Harry on his way back from accompanying his sister

to the station, and lured him into a *conditorei*, where she ate several ices, and he went through the preliminaries of losing his head.

He was thoroughly pleased with Germany. The language did not bother him, as, through a long run of foreign boarders who despised every tongue but their own, Anna had gained a thorough command of English, while Mademoiselle had picked up enough to flirt with, during a year's governing at Brighton.

Anna, however, saw to it that he had his daily lessons. A week later she was seated on the balcony with her workbasket, waiting for teacher and pupil to arrive for the French one, which, owing to Mademoiselle's idiosyncrasies, she made a point of being present at, when she heard Harry enter the house and lounge upstairs. A softer foot followed, mounted to the bedroom storey, and a minute later descended.

She was sitting with her back to the wall, on a line with the window, and so was not visible from inside.

'We are alone. *Quel bonheur!*' Mademoiselle cried. 'Ah! What a morning, my friend! And once more we are not discovered. You know not what I risk for your sake.'

'It's awfully good of you. But what a nasty-minded lot they must be here to see any harm in a fellow taking a girl out for a row! I've done it hundreds of times at home.'

'And kissed hundreds of hands? Ah, *perfidé!*'

Harry laughed.

'Lord, no! They'd have boxed my ears. They weren't that sort, don't you know?'

'Now you are polite, *par exemple!* I am sorry I showed to you my poor blister.'

'I'm not. Let's look at it again.'

'Ah!'—Anna had stepped in quietly through the window—'To-day, *Fräulein*, I teach by conversation and gesture. What is it to wave the hand, *Monsieur?*' And she gave her extended arm a dramatic flourish.

Harry stood blushing and silent, and Anna liked him for his clumsy recovery. Her opinion of Mademoiselle she expressed that afternoon when Harry was at the baths.

The little Belgian was a good fighter. She denied, she entreated, she stormed. Her rhetoric was vivid and impassioned. An innocent girl was being ruined; a poor one thrust penniless on the street. But Heaven was just, and right would prevail.

Anna had locked the bedroom door as she entered, and now pointed, with the key, to Mademoiselle's trunk.

'The *Droschke* will be here shortly. You had a quarter's salary last week, and I am going to pay for your ticket. As for ruining you, that is nonsense. I'm quite willing to certify your competence as a teacher. I only decline to have you longer as my guest. You have abused my hospitality.'

After that she sat silent, until Mademoiselle had dashed her belongings into her box, and exhausted the rotten eggs of her vocabulary. Then she accompanied her to the station, not loosening her grip till the enemy had been steamed out of sight.

She had denied her a fair field because she knew there would be favour shown. Paris still gives the apple to Venus, and when Paris has an Uncle Dick, the exercise of his judicial powers is dangerous. So Venus was popped into an *oubliette*, and Minerva went home victorious.

But Venus is a cunning as well as a potent goddess; and that evening, when Harry's *Abendessen* was being spoilt by the news of her departure, Mademoiselle was bargaining for a cheap lodging in a back street of the town.

She had got out at the first station and returned; and next morning, when she sighted the knickerbockered figure strolling disconsolately towards the river, she smiled.

'His foot is heavy, he grieves. *Bon!* He is desolate.' And she slipped up behind him.

'Good-day, Mr. Harry. Is it from preference that you walk alone?'

The boy's flush of pleasure decided her game.

'Back already! But this is great!'

It was early. They had the road to themselves. Catching his arm, she sobbed out the rhetoric which had fallen so flat upon Anna, but which stirred Harry even beyond her desires.

'The hateful old cat! The monster! I'm going back this minute to have it out with her.' And he made a stride with that intention.

But Mademoiselle tightened her grasp.

'Would you then injure me further, my friend?' she sighed, with gentle reproach. 'Listen. That woman has deceived you. She has what you call "played a deep game." We owe her not the truth. If she knew that I had returned—that you interest yourself still in my society—ah! be sure she would part us. She is a stone, without pity, without conscience. She would write a lie to your adorable uncle, who would summon you to your home. Now we meet all the days. We converse, we amuse ourselves,

we are happy. With another I should fear, I should guard myself. But with you—— Ah! I know my Harry's heart. Is he not an English gentleman? The girl who loves him, and whom he loves—is she not as secure as in a cloister? We are young, we are poor, we will wait. We were made for joy and love, we will find it in one another.' And she raised to him brave, sweet eyes, in which rapture shone through tears.

'And now we have an hour for pleasure,' she cried, with a change of mood. 'Let us be gay children, good comrades. I will go with you on the river. Perhaps you will kiss my blister. It is what we will discover.'

That morning's instalment of the idyll was so charming that Harry was eager for the next, and time and place were arranged for its issue. But as soon as he was alone he grew nervous about the later chapters.

'I'm in a deuce of a mess,' he groaned, when he saw how they must be written.

He was used to insoluble problems—his examination papers were composed of them. But the way out of that was a blank sheet. Here the equivalent of the blank sheet was the night express. What was good enough for a lazy boy, however, would not pass in an English gentleman. Was a secret engagement the answer? The bother was, his uncle trusted him.

Then his thoughts of Mademoiselle began to cool. Nice girls don't get a fellow into such holes. If you kiss a girl, it is, of course, because you love her; and if you love her, of course you must marry her. The chain of reasoning was complete, yet the conclusion did not seem to follow from the premises.

'I wish I could consult the old boy,' he sighed; 'and, by Jove, it's just what I'll do.'

With much labour of brain and pen, the matter was put before his uncle. In the relief of shifting his burden on to someone else, he forgot his annoyance with Mademoiselle, and it was not from any want of chivalry in the written lines that the word 'adventuress' was so legible between them.

Meanwhile, Mademoiselle was eating ices with her tobacconist, who, not being an English gentleman, or, indeed, a gentleman of any nationality, was approachable on less arduous lines.

When Harry told her of his letter home, she could have torn him piecemeal, but what she did was to drop on to a rustic bench, and sob out her soul.

'Ah, cruel! All is over. I am undone. Your uncle knows

me not. To him I shall appear an adventuress—I who would have loved my Harry if he had been a beggar on the road. I would have waited for many years, and complained not. I would have married you now, and worked for myself, till you could claim me. I am of those who give all and ask nothing. They will select for you some rich heiress, and you will be rich and proud; but happy—ah, no! not happy. The memory of the heart you have broken will make bitter all your days. You will visit my tomb in your dreams, and in the morning you will be weary of your life.'

What could Harry do but comfort her?

'You are supposing the old boy to be a cad, whereas he's the very soul of honour. I'm certain he'll see we must marry.'

But Mademoiselle shook her head.

'When I think how I should have loved him—the dear, brave, suffering warrior! Oh, yes! I would have nursed him, adored him. I hate not to keep house, like your sister. I am domestic and make the home gay. I am *économe* and spend little money. We marry secretly, and we present ourselves. At first they are angry, with the stiff anger of your country. But I reply not. I am only grieved. I coax, and what arrives? "*Tiens!*" they say. "This wife of Harry's whom we desired not, she has her qualities, all the same. She is sweet and clever; she is become necessary to us." They lean on me, till I manage all. Then I talk, I am *spirituelle*, and your friends come much to the house. The young gentlemen of your world envy you. They tell each other that this Harry has done well for himself, for I shine above their stupid wives.

'When you go to the war, I comfort your dear uncle. And for all this you need no money, for I demand not a separate home. I understand the life patriarchal.'

Before the completed picture of what might have been, Mademoiselle burst into tears again. But next moment she had forced a wan smile.

'Yet for this day and to-morrow you are mine. When do you receive the letter? Not till the day after that? *Bon!* For so long, then, I have my Paradise.'

And such a blissful place did she make it for Adam that morning that he was mad with himself for having worked for ejection, and was only consoled by the thought that a man of his uncle's nice honour was not likely to employ the flaming sword.

That idea of marrying privately, and leaving the issue in Mademoiselle's competent hands, was dangerously attractive.

When, at their next meeting, he was shown the picture again, with some finishing touches added and the colours heightened, so to speak, by Mademoiselle's imaginative varnish, he realised that he had missed his life's supreme good; and on the third morning, when she once more exhibited her canvas, he cried:

'By Jove! We could bolt yet, if I had only the tin! As it happens, I'm quite cleaned out. I've only two quid left of my allowance.'

'Two quid? I know not the coin.'

'Two pounds. It's cursed luck.'

Mademoiselle's face fell. She drew herself upright from his shoulder.

'Is your uncle, then, a miser? I have believed that he was rich.'

'A miser! Good Lord, no! He gives us every penny he can spare. As for rich, that depends what you mean by rich.'

'You have mentioned to me your men-servants.'

'There are one or two about the place, of course.'

'And in the house?'

'Some women.'

'Then must your uncle have money. You see, it is an *établissement*. It is certain you ask not enough. But listen to me, my dear one. I will take the tickets.'

'You? But you haven't a copper.'

'I have worked. I have amassed some pounds.'

'And do you think I'd touch your poor little savings?'

To Mademoiselle's amazement, this ridiculous scruple of Harry's gave her more trouble than all his other ones put together.

When she had overcome it at last and induced him to leave her, she was really too tired to change her manner for the benefit of the tobacconist, who was waiting for her, by appointment, in a *café*.

But so persistent was her luck that her fatigue proved to be a trump card in the next round of the game. Her weariness invested her with a pensive charm which struck a finer chord than usual in Herr Wolff's coarse-fibred heart. Marriage had been talked of between them. Of late, Mademoiselle had hung back. Now, by something almost like love, Herr Wolff felt impelled to secure her.

But Mademoiselle shook her head.

'Ah, no! I am ashamed! I am ashamed!' Then she blushed, and made a clean breast of it.

'How can I come to you with nothing? I have not the *sou*. Even a wedding-dress I cannot buy.'

'We'll soon settle that, if that's all!' And with a generosity that astonished himself, and convinced him of the genuineness of his passion, her lover filled in, and handed her, quite a handsome cheque.

Mademoiselle was overcome; she agreed to be presented to his mother the following day, and hurried off to be alone with her joy—and to cash the cheque.

The tobacconist did not usually rise early, but Fate was in need of an emissary, so, having given him a sleepless night, she prompted him to a soothing stroll by the river.

Harry and Mademoiselle were on their favourite bench, a clump of willows behind them and the sluggish water at their feet. Across a mile of meadow rose the misty spires of the town.

But the lovers had no eyes for the landscape, or for the figure so curiously at pause in it, that had been approaching them. They did not see it change its course, to take them in the rear, and were undisturbed by its presence, some minutes later, in the thicket behind them.

'So it is settled!' and Mademoiselle clapped her hands. 'You return for what you have need of. You leave a letter in the hall to say you have pain of the head, and will row the whole day on the river. At eleven o'clock I am here. At the *Mathilden Brücke* you hire a boat. You urge it with your strong arms towards me. I step in; we vanish. Four miles further is a station. We leave the boat tied to a tree. In time the owner will find it. At one o'clock passes a train. We reach London, where we are married. We fall at your dear uncle's feet. *N'est-ce pas que c'est bien arrangé?* Oh, it is a perfect romance, of which you are the adorable hero!'

So Mademoiselle wove her spells, and Harry sat impotent as Merlin.

They were still engrossed in their rosy plans when the tobacconist was ushered in to Anna.

Anna was feeling oppressed that morning, the world lay so light on her shoulders. The servants were more than sufficient for the work. She did not even sport the dressing-gown and duster which are the *Hausfrau's* insignia of office. In fact, boredom was bearing down upon her, when Herr Wolff came panting to her deliverance.

She listened with a kindling eye.

'But why do you come to me?' she asked. 'If the woman is betrothed to you, you had the right to interfere personally.'

'She *was* betrothed. She's no concern of mine now. But I decided to keep that news till her fine gentleman had failed her. I'm looking forward to breaking it then. Oh, she won't be alone at her tryst! As for your pretty man, I'd lock him in his room if I were you. Three's a crowd, and if three turn up one of them will get a ducking.'

'I should be sorry for that,' smiled Anna. 'You've been badly enough treated already. But I must thank you for your information, upon which I shall act as I think best.'

When Herr Wolff scowled himself out of the house, he seemed to take ten of Anna's years with him. The acid of his soul had bitten lines into his face, while the joy of battle had smoothed them out of hers.

It was a quarter to ten. Harry must return shortly, if he was to leave again in time to reach the willows by eleven. She knew the trysting-place. It was the limit of a favourite school promenade.

First of all she oiled the lock of Harry's door. There would be something gained if he did not know at once of his imprisonment. When he did know, there was the chance that he might break through. The panels were flimsy; he was a giant. Then—she would describe the tobacconist. If that failed, there must be four at the meeting.

A minute or two later Anna was dressing for the worst, Harry bounding upstairs to his room, and a servant dashing to the post-office with the telegram, 'Telegraph for Harry instantly. Pretend urgency. Danger here.'

The housemaid on the top landing, concluding from the bonnet that her mistress was going out, sauntered down for a gossip to the kitchen. But Anna was in the *Wohnstube*, opposite the clock.

'I will risk five minutes,' she thought. 'The longer I delay, short of losing him, the better.'

But Harry did not trouble about the note which was to explain his absence. He was only anxious to get clear; and, cramming a few necessities into a bag, he bolted just as Anna had risen to secure him.

Then some more years rolled from Anna's shoulders.

'I used to be able to run,' she laughed; 'but I'll have to change my skirt.'

It was the day of polonaises and trains, and she saw that it would be better to lose a minute at the start than to have every step trammelled by her draperies.

She was at her wardrobe door, when the street-door bell rang again.

'*Gott sei Dank!* He has forgotten something.' And she heard her victim, after some words to the housemaid, turn into his room.

This time she did not linger. The noiseless key did its work instantly, and she resumed her place opposite the clock.

The hands moved on slowly to the half-hour. Harry was allowing himself little enough time, but so much the better for her.

At last he rang, although she had not heard him trying the door. The housemaid tripped upstairs, but Anna intercepted her on the landing.

'Take no notice of Mr. Harry's bell. He is under restraint at present. I will attend to him myself, when it is necessary.'

The girl stared; then her mouth twitched.

'But, *Fräulein*, Mr. Harry is not within. It is an old gentleman, his father, who waits for him. I told him you had gone out, for, indeed, you passed me in your bonnet.'

It was now Anna who stared; but only for a moment. Her prisoner had discovered his case, and was wrenching at the door-handle.

She opened, and confronted a curious-looking little wisp of a man, who stepped back with an amused smile.

'I thought you were——'

'Harry, no doubt. You employ drastic methods, madam. Is the rogue, then, so hard to manage? I must confess myself his uncle, though I fear the kinship may not recommend me to your favour.'

'You are Captain Warren!' Anna exclaimed, betraying more plainly than she knew the shock caused by his appearance. The hero of her imagination had had stature to match his soul. She had endowed him with a kingly exterior.

'Patricia's doing,' thought the little man. 'Her usual fancy sketch.'

The urgency of circumstances saved the situation.

'Harry has eloped. Come! Help me to catch him!' And Anna darted downstairs.

Then Captain Warren proved that inches are not the measure of the hero. He had travelled in defiance of his doctor's orders. For two nights he had not slept. That morning he had been too

ill to break his fast. Endurance was frayed to the thinnest thread. But he did not hesitate at the summons. His duty was plain, and he could but die.

So he panted down the *Taubenstrasse* behind the train which Anna had caught recklessly high, and tumbled after it into a *Droschke*.

'*Zur Mathilden Brücke! Schnell!*' cried Anna.

'Yes, very *schnell!*' gasped the captain, showing the man a handful of silver. Well run, madam! Well run, indeed!' Then he lay back and closed his eyes.

Anna looked round at him and realised his condition.

'Have you brandy?' she asked quickly.

He handed her his flask.

'No; for yourself'; and, pouring some into the drinking-cup, she held it out to him.

He drank it and sat up. The swift drive, too, was helping him.

'So my nephew is eloping. When? And how?'

'At this moment. In a boat.'

'And we give chase in another. I see. But, in this modern variant of the post-chaise, you may have noticed I can be of little service'; and he glanced at his empty sleeve.

Anna was becoming reconciled to Nature's miserly equipment of her hero, and she gave him a beautiful smile, which did more for him than either brandy or air.

'I know all about that,' she said gently.

'Patricia once more!' he groaned.

At the Mathilden Bridge they found plenty of boats, but no boatmen. There was only a little boy in charge.

The captain plunged his hand into his pocket again. This time he drew out a gold piece, and held it up to the cabby, while he turned to Anna.

'Tell him the lad will look after his cab. He shall have this to row us.'

Anna offered the bait in German, and the man agreed.

Poor Anna's tastes were not aquatic—indeed, she had never been on the river before; but after her first involuntary clutch at the gunwale she set her teeth, and folded her hands in her lap, with a brave appearance of security.

The captain recognised a kindred spirit, and his sunken eyes shone, but he only nodded his approval. Then he shook his head.

Our man's a failure, I fear. He's shockingly out of training. He's barely good for a mile. I'll have to take an oar.'

And he did so, with his left arm, to Anna's dismay, who did not, of course, know his youthful record on the Isis.

But his exhaustion increased with every stroke, and she was just about to insist on a halt, when she perceived a dripping figure in the distance.

'Herr Wolff!' she exclaimed. 'I'm glad he has got his ducking!'

The captain looked round. 'You know him? Then bid him get in. He must row us,' and he took the boat to the side.

'They're off. So much for your promise!' the tobacconist shouted as he approached.

'We'll catch them yet, with your help. This is the gentleman's uncle.'

'So!' And, stepping aboard, Herr Wolff seized both oars, and struck out with a vicious will.

The captain's face lighted up. 'A most obliging young man! And he might be Oxford trained. I doubt if Harry is his match. We have a chance, I think. I had hoped to avert the catastrophe, which I judged from the boy's letter was impending. I trust we shall do so still. Might I trouble you now for the details?'

He smiled curiously when Anna had given them.

'Without claiming to be a Demosthenes,' he said, 'I think my eloquence will prevail with such a lady as you describe. I am furnished with an excellent argument. As for your conduct in the affair—you will pardon me for calling it superb.'

The willows were passed, and the next bend brought the row-away couple in sight. The captain looked keenly ahead.

'They seem to be taking it easy. We must not rouse their suspicions. Please bid our boatman go slower. We must contrive to get within hail before they take alarm.'

The pursuers crept up steadily, and in a few minutes would have got alongside unobserved, when Mademoiselle happened to look back and recognised them.

'Fräulein Anna comes. Row, Harry, row!'

They were shooting ahead, when the captain sprang up. He gave an odd, shrill whistle, and waved a bandana handkerchief.

Harry paused. The whistle was repeated, and he cried, 'By Jove! It's the old boy himself. It's Uncle Dick!'

'Your uncle! Then row for your life. *Mon Dieu!* Do you hear me? Row!'

'Oh, I say, that's out of the question. We can't bolt now he's seen us.'

Mademoiselle ground her teeth. '*Misérable! Lâche!*' she hissed. 'Ah, you great, large fool! Have the goodness, then, since all is at end, to tell your insupportable uncle that we go on a party of pleasure.'

Next moment she had clasped her hands. 'Ah, my Harry, forgive me! It is the thought to lose you that renders me mad! *Écoute!* Always I work for your sake. Arrange that I return with your uncle, and I will search for his weakness. Oh, you will see well that I will charm him! It is a difficult game, but I play it. The insolent whom you pushed in the water rows them. He will have told the purpose of our voyage. But my eyes speak truth. I explain his falsehood. It is jealousy. We sail for pleasure; that is it.'

When her enemies came up she welcomed them with a radiant smile, which skimmed over Anna and the tobacconist as if they had been natural objects, and rested intimately on the captain.

'Ah!' she cried, stretching out an impulsive little hand, 'I cannot wait to be presented. You are the Uncle Dick that I know so well from Harry. He makes all the world to be your friend in advance. When he brings me on the water sometimes, as now, it is always to your praise that I listen. And never have I doubted a word. So you, too, must believe good of me.'

Mademoiselle was so pretty and arch, and the captain bowed so gallantly, that Anna groaned in spirit. Her Ulysses was hearkening to the siren. She seemed to hear the cracking of his bonds; and when, after shaking hands with his nephew, he proposed an exchange of seats, she had a vision of bleached bones.

'Miss Blumenthal has lost her morning through us, my boy, so you must row her home in your best style. As Mademoiselle is out for pleasure, I daresay she won't mind falling behind a bit with me. Our friend the cabby will take your oars.'

'It is my desire!' exclaimed the siren.

'As for you,' and the captain turned pleasantly to Herr Wolff, 'my thanks for your timely help. You would favour me by accepting this'; and he held out his drinking-flask. 'A good nip and a run home will be your wisest course; indeed'—and his tone was more pointed—'you must see it is the only possible one at present.'

The tobacconist hesitated. He understood the captain's drift, and looked both sullen and silly; but there was something daunting about the little Englishman, and with a muttered curse, he retired under the cover provided.

Anna's boating experiences did not improve. Harry was rudely polite, and she was trembling for her Ulysses.

Still, she knew that, if only in the body, he must return to her for a time, so she had the best bed sheeted with the best linen, and prepared a bowl of *Fleischsuppe*. This she made the captain drink in his room, to which she led him straight from the hall door.

He sank into a chair as ordered, and looked up with quaint humility while she bullied him for his good.

'I want you to understand,' she said, severely, 'that you are more than half dead. I will allow you a five minutes' interview with Harry. After that, he will provide you with what you require, and you will go to bed. You must promise to obey, or I will lock you in; you know my drastic method.'

It was a new experience for the captain to be the lame dog helped over the stile. His office had hitherto been to succour, and he blinked once or twice—he was very weak.

Then he struggled to his feet.

'Dear madam, I cannot accept your hospitality without telling you the argument that prevailed with our charming Mademoiselle. It is this:—I am a ruined man. My scamp of a lawyer has absconded. Three fourths of my fortune have gone with him. The loss has just occurred, so that my poor girl and boy are still in ignorance of it. Fortunately, enough is left to start Harry in his career, and to provide a simple home for Patricia. My estate is already in the market, and it is probable we may settle abroad, where, they tell me, living and young folk's amusements are cheaper than with us. So, besides being a sick man, I'm a poor one, and, indeed, down on my luck all round—a most undesirable guest in every way.'

Anna stood silent for a moment, gazing on him with such eyes as Our Lady of Consolation may bend on us from heaven.

'Ach! What sort of woman do you think me?'

The captain looked at her steadily.

'The best.' And he bowed over her hand.

Then she withdrew, and sent up Harry.

Some time after, Harry came to her in the *Wohnstube*, with misery but new strength in his face. He had borne the double blow well.

'Fräulein, I wish you'd forgive me; I've been a proper ass.'

'True for you,' laughed Patricia, bouncing in, gloriously frowzy and freckled. 'One's always safe to admit that. Well, I've had no end of a time! Hullo! You look blue. What's up?'

When they told her, she stamped with annoyance. 'Oh, the poor old dear!' she cried. 'And to think he had to bear it all alone! What it must have cost him, too, to tell you! Fräulein, I must give him one hug. Even if it wakes him, it will do him good.'

Next day she came giggling to Anna, who was cooking for her invalid in the kitchen.

'I say, Fräulein, you've made an impression. He thinks you an admirable woman.'

Later, when the convalescent had given signs that he considered Anna a good deal more, Patricia burst out again: 'I told you you'd love Uncle Dick!'

So Anna took up new burdens, and grew daily happier beneath their weight.

There was Harry to start in his career, and Patricia to sober for matrimony. Nor was the task light, though she loved it, of convincing the chivalrous soul whom henceforth she companioned that, despite his increasing infirmities and dearth of worldly goods, her marriage with him had brought her wealth untold.

MARGARET ARMOUR.

Babylon.

THE eastern gate of heaven was unbarred; Shamash, the Sun-god of Babylonia, flamed forth and stepped upon the Mount of Sunrise at the edge of the world. As he had poured the light of heaven upon the luxuriant gardens and fertile corn lands of the Babylonians, so was he pouring it upon the same spot, now an arid and deserted wilderness. We were crossing it on our way to visit Babylon; it was pitch dark when we had left Baghdad in the procession of covered arabas which conveyed pilgrims to Kerbela and merchants to Hillah. We had been roused at 2 A.M., and threaded our way silently through the sleeping streets by the light of a dim lantern. Huddled human forms lay about in angles and on doorsteps; and at every moment we stumbled over the outstretched limbs of a yellow dog. We crossed the Tigris in one of the round native boats, and landed within a few minutes' walk of the khan from where the arabas started. We had an araba to ourselves—an oblong wooden box on four wheels, with a light canvas top and canvas sides that could be rolled up or let down at pleasure; a narrow wooden plank, with a singularly sharp edge and an uncomfortably hard face, ran down each side and was called a seat. We were going to sit on it for twelve hours. We were drawn by four mules harnessed abreast. Our driver had knotted the reins and hooked them on to his seat; his hands were rolled inside his cloak, and he sat huddled up on the box in the freezing air of sunrise. The mules galloped ahead at their own discretion; the araba lurched over ruts; sudden jerks shot us against one another or threw us in the air, from where we descended with some emphasis in the vacuum between the two sharp edges.

Now the horizon on the left blazed orange and red, and the desert sands were pink. Stunted tufts of grey-green grass tried to assert themselves in the barren soil; mounds marking the site of ancient villages occurred at random. Walls of sand indicating the course of old irrigating canals broke the level plain; they

could almost be taken for the work of Nature, for the hand of Time had obliterated the marks of man. Every twenty minutes the arabas come to a sudden stop to give the mules breathing time; there is a general dismounting of the passengers; the plain is suddenly dotted with bending, praying forms, groups of excited talking Arabs, isolated, contemplative, smoking individuals, fussy superior Turkish officers flicking the specks of travel off their smart uniforms. Veiled women peep from behind the curtain of a closely packed conveyance; a small Arab child plants himself with outstretched legs in front of us, and sucks his thumb in complete absorption as he gazes upon us like a little wild animal. Then the whole scene dissolves itself into a sudden rush for the carriages, as of so many rabbits bolting into a warren at the sound of an alarm, and off goes the whole train at a gallop; belated loiterers hang perilously on the step of any conveyance they can catch, and try to snatch the lash of the whip with which the driver good-humouredly flicks them. Finally, we approach a collection of mud huts; we dash through them, scattering hens and children, and draw up in a long line opposite a large khan in the centre of the village. This is one of the regular halting-places for caravans, and we have a short wait while the mules are being changed. A stall close by is already closely besieged by our fellow-travellers clamouring for tea, which is sold in small glasses after the Persian custom. We buy a little blue dish of thick cream from an Arab girl in a blue smock, and make a sumptuous breakfast off it and dates.

With a fresh set of mules we start off again; the party is more lively; we dash up the sides of an embankment, catch a glimpse of a silted-up canal as we waver for a moment on the top; then a fearful double lurch throws us about as the two front wheels go downwards, whilst the two back ones are still going upwards. A short sharp descent follows; then comes a level stretch; the driver boys shout and race one another; we overtake and are overtaken; we jeer and are jeered at.

And the Sun-god pursues his journey in silence and unconcern across the dome of Heaven.

We pass bands of Persian pilgrims on their way to the sacred tomb of Hosein, son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet. Many of them trudge along on foot, grasping only the stout staff which one's mind associates with pilgrims; these give a true feeling of sackcloth and ashes; some ride mules and carry a few worldly goods in saddle-bags; there is a Pasha mounted on a fine Arab

horse and followed by servants ; large pack trunks on mules in his train make one doubt the existence of his hair shirts ; the women sit in covered wicker cradles suspended on each side of mules ; donkeys bear rude coffins strapped crossways over their backs, for the ambition of the true believer is not only to make the pilgrimage during life, but that after death his bones may rest in peace in the holy ground of Hosein's martyrdom.

At Mushayhib we halt again to get a fresh relay of mules ; here the roads branch, and we part company with the rest of the party, who are going to Kerbela. We jerk along over the ridged and rutty ground ; I find myself wondering whether cushions in the chariots were amongst the luxuries of wicked Babylon, and, if so, whether it was part of the punishment of the fourth generation that we should be deprived of them. We come to a marshy tract with water standing in pools ; the driver thrashes the mules vigorously and shouts ; the animals plunge forward and the boy bends his body to and fro with them as they plunge. We go headlong into the marsh and stick ; the boy uses his whip unsparingly ; the light, energetic members of our party dismount ; the fat and heavy ones remain seated ; we all shout in anger or encouragement, and by means of these strenuous endeavours are landed on the other side.

On the horizon in front we see a black line ; it is formed, we are told, by the rows of palm-trees which border the Euphrates. We are now soberly trotting towards a great mound, which, rising abruptly out of the level plain, appears in the distance like a sudden thought of Nature's, tired of the monotony of her own handiwork. But as we approach, its symmetrical sides and flat table top proclaim it to be the work of man. Our native escort tell us in subdued tones of awe how Marut and Harut, the fallen angels, are suspended by their heels in the centre awaiting the day of judgment. We leave it at some distance to the right ; in front of us stretches a tract of land more desolate and naked even than that through which we have been driving ; small heaps are scattered amongst a few larger mounds, and all are enveloped in a network of high-banked canals, now mostly silted up ; there are marshy pools here and there, and rough tussocks of coarse grass catch the blown sand.

'And Babylon shall become heaps,' said Jeremiah. It was the heaps of Babylon we were looking upon. Babylon, the 'glory of nations,' was laid out in front of us.

The Sun-god had reached the pinnacle of his height, and covered the spot with the brightness of heaven.

We made a *détour* round the edge to avoid the embankments and marshy places, and then struck to the right across the uneven ground at a jolting foot's pace towards a clump of palms on the banks of the river. The trees partly concealed the one stone house of the district, the home of three German professors who are superintending the work of excavation now going on. A mud wall separated it from a collection of mud huts; here live the natives employed in removing the sand which buries the architectural monuments of ancient times.

We were at the foot of one of the larger mounds; it is called the Kasr by travellers and Mujelibe (the overturned) by the Arabs, and represents the only part of Babylon which is not altogether buried. We climbed up the great square mass composed entirely of the *débris* of former habitations. The surface was strewn with broken bricks and tiles; in the centre stood the remains of solid blocks of masonry. Looking down into a large ravine at the further end we saw, half blocked with rubbish, walls, courtyards, doorways, pilasters, and buttresses built of pale yellow-coloured bricks, each bearing the name of Nebuchadnezzar. Here and there architectural ornaments were built in with the walls; bits of bright-coloured enamel and pieces of broken pottery lay about. We wandered through the huge ruin, balancing ourselves on the edges of low remaining walls and clambering from one courtyard to another. A jackal darted from under our feet with a shrill bark; he was answered from behind distant walls by innumerable hidden companions; an owl flew out of a dark corner and perched blinking a little way off; a great black crow hovered uneasily overhead. The broad walls of Babylon were indeed utterly broken, and her houses were indeed full of doleful creatures. We sat down and listened to the wild beasts crying in her desolate houses; it was indeed 'a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant.'

Shamash the Sun-god was nearing the western gate of heaven; the gate-bolts of the bright heavens were giving him greeting.

The Euphrates and its wooded banks lay between us and the horizon. Above the river line we saw a row of jet-black palms in an orange setting; and below it a row of jet-black palms standing on their heads in the rippled golden water. Shamash has reached the summit of the Mount of Sunset; he slowly descends; the orange changes to red, the general conflagration becomes streaked and barred; the waters of the river grow black, almost as black as the reflected palms; the streaks slowly die away; Shamash

has entered into the Kirib Shame, the 'Innermost part of Heaven, that mysterious realm beyond the heavenly ocean, where the great gods dwell apart from mankind.'

O Shamash, thou art the judge of the world,
Thou directest the decisions thereof.

Thus prayed the dwellers of the city four thousand years ago. And with the same light with which you lit the pomp and splendour of the works of their time, you light the decay and ruin and hideous desolation of the present.

'Verily there is a God which judgeth the earth,' say we, four thousand years later.

And as you smiled on those who worshipped you as the supreme God, Controller of all things, so you smile on us who look upon you, bound and fixed, with no will of your own, following the inevitable laws of Nature. Will you, four thousand years hence, light with the same light sojourners in this land, and will they wonder at our conception of your nature and function, as we wonder at the faith that your ancient worshippers had in you? Or will you, before then, have run your allotted course and consumed the whole world, whether in the fiery furnace of your wrath or in the uncontrolled madness of your broken bonds?

The next morning we visited Babel, the mound we had passed the day before. We walked for more than a mile through the palm-groves by the river; under the shade of the trees were numerous huts made of mud, covered and enclosed with piles of fine brushwood. There were various signs of human occupation. Two cows were toiling peacefully up and down an entrenchment drawing water in skins over a rough windlass; the skins emptied themselves into a channel, and the water wandered about in vaguely directed irrigation. On the bank beside them lolled an Arab with a long pole, who prodded the sleepy beasts in the moments when he was more awake than they were. A large mass of brushwood was moving in front of us; it looked like one of the huts endowed with a pair of very thin brown legs; as we overtook it the mass half turned towards us, and a woman's form doubled in two looked small in the middle of it.

At the doors of the enclosures naked children sprawled about, all with gleaming white teeth and closely-shaven heads, save for the one lock of hair with which they are to be pulled up to heaven; women with tattooed faces and dangling ornaments pounded barley in primitive stone mortars, and baked thin cakes of bread on flat stones.

Leaving the riverside, we struck out to the right for half a mile across the bare parched ground, where tufts of rough grass were trying to get a footing in the white barren soil. We climbed up the mound, passing bands of workmen tunnelling in the sides and removing the bricks which lay about in tumbled heaps or in bits of standing walls.

From the top of Babel we could look right over the tract of land once enclosed by the walls of Babylon. The descriptions of Herodotus enable the traveller to call up some sort of idea of the scene in his time. We learn from him that the city was built in the form of a square, surrounded by walls of enormous strength; each side of the square was fourteen miles long; each side had twenty-five gates of solid brass and was defended by square towers built above the wall; twenty-five streets went straight across the city each way from gate to gate. The city was thus cut into squares. The houses, three or four storeys high, faced the street and were built at a little distance apart from each other; between them were gardens and plantations. A branch of the river ran through the city; its banks were one long quay. The larger buildings stood in the centre of a square, each apparently fortified and surrounded by walls of its own. It is of these smaller walls only that any trace can be detected. From the foot of Babel, where we stood, remains of earthen ramparts could be traced for two or three miles southwards; they then turned at right-angles towards the river and extended as far as its eastern bank. The mounds they enclosed were presumably the site of the more important buildings. Babel itself is supposed to represent the temple of Belus. The Mujelibe, or Kasr, lying to the south of us, is identified with the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar and the Hanging Gardens; further south still was a lesser mound, Amram. We knew that Birs Nimroud, the great ruin which is looked upon as the Tower of Babel, lay beyond this again, although we could not see it from where we stood.

The whole gleamed white in the strong sunshine. On our right the Euphrates rolled along, as unconcerned in its course as the Sun-god overhead. We could trace the direction of the river southwards to the horizon, marked by the palms along its banks; they made a thin dark line across a wide light plain—an alluvial tract which is only waiting to yield its hidden gifts on the day when man joins hands with Nature, and distributes the waters of the river. But not so the actual soil of Babylon; that soil, consisting as it does of building dust and *débris*, is of a nature which

destroys vegetation. 'The Lord of hosts hath swept it with the besom of destruction,' and it is doomed perpetually to be a 'dry land, a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth.'

As we looked upon the great plain which stretched away all round until it carried the eye on into the sky above, we could almost believe with the ancients that the edge of the earth joined the dome of heaven, and that both were supported by the waters of Apsu—the deep.

A great wave of silence rolled out of the desert and broke over us; it seemed natural to be immersed in silence. Could anything else be expected from a land which had never been alive with the stir of humanity even in far-off ages, of which one might now feel the hush while listening for the echo? The desert had always been silent, and would be silent for evermore—a dead, unconscious silence, with no significance save of absence of life. But when we looked at the site of Babylon stretched just beneath us, we became vividly conscious of a real living silence; we were listening to the 'hum of mighty workings'; voices of souls long since dead, the dust of whose bodies lay at our feet, were 'wakening the slumbering ages.' Had not Nebuchadnezzar entered into the House of the Dead in the great cavern Araltu, the Land of No Return? The dead had been stirred up, even the chief ones of earth, to greet him as he entered hell. 'Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave and the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee and the worms cover thee . . .'; and they looked at him narrowly, saying: 'Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?'

And yet still for us 'the wind uttered' and 'the spirit heard' his vainglorious cry: 'Is not this the great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty?'

The silent answer to it lay at our feet. And, listening, we heard the solemn warnings of Daniel, the sorrowful forebodings of Jeremiah, and, above all, the ironical voice of Isaiah:

Let them stand up and save thee,
Mappers of heavens, Planet observers, Tellers of new moons,
From what must befall thee.

As we listened again we heard the noise 'like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together. . . .'

' . . . A sound of battle is in the land and of great destruction. . . . ' ' . . . A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans. . . . '

' One post ran to meet another post, and one messenger to meet another to show the King of Babylon that his city is taken. '

Then we heard a sound of much feasting and revelry ; we heard a solemn hush when there came forth fingers as of a man's hand and wrote upon the wall ; even as we listened to the hush it seemed to grow into the great hush of ages, and we remembered that we stood alone in the living silence of these great dead surrounded by the dead silence of an uninhabited land.

Overhead the Sun-god silently vaunted his eternal existence, at our feet the Euphrates rolled fresh waters of oblivion from an eternal source to an eternal sea.

LOUISA JEBB.

At the Sign of the Ship.

A CHRISTIAN should always try to suit his conversation to his company. We ought not to discuss problems of prosody in the presence of a hunting man, any more than two hunting men, at dinner, should argue about the merits of a new bit across a lady who takes no interest in the subject. These are obvious moral maxims. The horse is a noble animal between whom and myself there has never been any familiarity; it must be something other than familiarity that, on the horse's side, has 'bred contempt' for me—a sentiment shared by all who think mainly, and talk solely, about horses. Having a friend who possesses a selling-plater, about which he imparts to me a good deal of information, and other friends who hunt, I have deemed it a duty to get up some facts about the horse. It seemed proper to begin as far back as possible, with the horse in pre-glacial times, so that, in Professor Ewart's words, I might 'find an answer to the important and oft-repeated question, What is a pony?'

* * *

My studies, to a great extent, are wasted. The owner of the selling-plater did not care to hear about pre-glacial ponies, and my hunting acquaintances were entirely indifferent to the merits of the extinct American *Equus complicatus*, perhaps because the poor animal is extinct, without offspring, which, in my eyes, invests him with a melancholy interest. My sportive friends were quite indifferent to a fact which every patriotic American—and most Americans are patriotic—will hear of with pride. The bosom of Professor Brander Matthews, especially, will glow when he learns that Europe was discovered by an American horse. Leif the Lucky, Eric the Red, Christopher Columbus, and other European discoverers of America, must take back seats: the discoverer of Europe lived long before their day, and was 'a genuine Mexican plug.' Professor Ewart tells us that America abounded in horses when the old world had none and European sportsmen

were bereft of the chief interest of life—namely, before ‘The Great Ice Age.’ At that period, when Asia and America were connected by land, adventurous American horses browsed their way to this country and left their remains in our pliocene deposits.

* * *

This discovery is most creditable to the American horse, but I deeply regret to add that, like some unpatriotic Americans, the horse, having once arrived in Europe, never went back to the States. He seems to have preferred European institutions. For this reason the horse, after all, does not, morally speaking, deserve a statue in the Capitol as the discoverer of Europe. Having found that continent, the horses of America universally migrated thither. ‘We know that before the beginning of the historic age horses had become extinct in America,’ writes Professor Ewart. The Mexican mustangs of to-day are descended from horses carried over by historical European adventurers.

* * *

If the horse became extinct in his native prairies, as he certainly did, it must be because horses emigrated *en masse*. What other fact could extinguish them in America? The climate and grazing grounds of that continent suit horses very well. They cannot have been devoured by mammoths and mastodons; they did not shrink before the competition of the mylodon. Man could not have exterminated them, like the buffalo, whom the Indians could never have destroyed; to do that required the magazine rifles of cockney sportsmen. Thus horses can only have become extinct in America because, having discovered the old world, they were so unpatriotic as to prefer that to the country of the Stars and Stripes. The natural result was that Europe annexed America. The Aztecs and the Indians, having no horses, could not found a sturdy civilisation, and they fell before the cavaliers of Cortès and Pizarro, before the Elizabethan adventurers and the passengers in the *Mayflower*. If American horses had found at home sufficient scope for their ambition, America would have annexed a horseless Europe—that is, if our horses are all of American descent, which is a point that I do not pretend to decide. But it is certain that if America had not been deprived of her native steeds, the history of mankind would have been very different.

Man is more interesting to me than the horse, and though I base these sweeping generalisations on Professor Ewart's 'Multiple Origin of Horses and Ponies' (in the *Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland*, 1904), the reflections are not to be found in the Professor's work. 'Without woman what should we be?' said the gentleman who had to propose the health of the ladies. What we should be without the horse is a question easily answered. We should be, at best, no more civilised than the Incas and Aztecs, victims of any race in possession of horse-power. Without America it really seems that we should have been deprived of the cavalry arm, and of beasts of burden. The Professor writes: 'It is generally admitted that the ancestors of the living Equidæ reached the Old World from the New, the later immigrants crossing by land bridges in the vicinity of Behring Strait.' On that migration turned the whole fortunes of the human race.

* * *

Another generalisation! The Celts of Scotland, if I may say so without being dirked or denounced in Gaelic sermons, rather 'got left behind.' Historically, the creeping Saxon of the Lowlands outstripped them in the march of civilisation. This was not the result of any lack of mental or bodily excellence on the part of the Celt. It was merely because a low class of American equine immigrants settled down in the Highlands, and begat the *Equus Caballus Celticus*, the common 'Celtic pony.' The Celt had thus no cavalry. A recent English novelist represents Lochiel entering Edinburgh in 1745 'at the head of five hundred of the picked horsemen of his clan.' But the Camerons, of course, had no horsemen: the Celtic pony is useless in war. Thus, the chivalry of Aberdeenshire, the Gordons, Keiths, Cheynes, and Forbeses, defeated Donald of the Isles at the battle of Harlaw. Thus Montrose's handful of horse helped to discomfit the Campbells at Inverlochy, when the trumpets saluted the royal standard in the winter dawn, within a valley of Ben Nevis. The following words tell the secret of the failure of the Celtic pony.

* * *

'At this moment there sounded from the gorge of the pass a lively flourish of trumpets, in that note with which it was the ancient Scottish fashion to salute the royal standard.

"You may hear, my lord, from yonder signals," said Sir Donald

Campbell, "that he who pretends to be the King's Lieutenant must be in person among these men."

"*And has probably horse with him,*" said Auchenbreck. "But shall we look pale for *that*?"

The end was, as we know, that Montrose's handful of horse broke on the right wing of Argyll. 'The mountaineers of that period had a superstitious dread of the war-horse, like that entertained by the Peruvians.' In these words about the Celtic and Peruvian dread of the horse, Sir Walter Scott anticipates the epoch-making generalisation which proves that human history, including that of the Highlanders, pivots on horseflesh and the equine migration from America. These circumstances, perhaps, will not interest that part of the community which devotes most of its time, money, and attention to the horse of the present day.

* * *

The natives of America, in the Age of Stone, the Neolithic Age, were certainly cleverer than the European peoples who come into view after palæolithic man disappears. He was an excellent artist; his sporting sketches of beasts, birds, and fishes are worthy of John Leech. But in Europe, for some reason, the much more civilised neolithic peoples drew as badly as a child draws on a slate when they tried to sketch a human figure; they commonly left out the mouth, just as some strange figures painted in an Australian cave, and discovered by Sir George Grey, are mouthless. Lately I noticed, on a hoarding in Edinburgh, similar mouthless figures drawn in chalk by a child; they were neither better nor worse than the mouthless shapes engraved by neolithic men in the galleries of dolmens in France. Now, in America, man in the neolithic stage gave great promise as a sculptor. Mr. Wilson, of the United States National Museum, in his *Prehistoric Art* (1898), gives wonderful specimens of ancient American sculpture and of human figures in pottery. There are two heads in stone, from New Jersey and Staten Island, which are very expressive. The type of face is that of a Roman bronze head in the Louvre, which anyone would take to represent a Red Indian. It is assigned to the first century before our era. How did a Roman see a Red Man? Mr. Wilson quotes our old enemy, Cornelius Nepos, who says that the King of the Suevi gave to Quintus Metellus Celer certain Indians, stranded on the German coasts, and it is suggested that one of these was the model of the bronze. One does not see how any Red Men could have had

canoes that would stand being driven across the Atlantic, thereby enabling them to discover Europe, and no Oriental Indians could have been stranded in Germany. Probably the resemblance of the bronze (if it really is Roman) to the Red Indian type is an amazing accident; but there are plenty of human faces and statues in stone from Georgia, and of vases in the shape of the human head, which our neolithic ancestors in Europe could not have executed; nay, the Greeks of the dark ages after the fall of the Mycenæan art were as incapable of such work as the Red Indians whom our early explorers found at home in America. Artistic inspiration is a mysterious thing; it burns and fades, it blows and ceases, while we cannot imagine whence it comes and which way it goes. Dr. Grosse has suggested that hunting races are keen observers and have abundant leisure, while neolithic man, a farmer, had little leisure and did not observe nature closely. He forgets that the Red Indians of recent times, though they did a little farming, were the keenest observers, while, as for leisure, since the women did the farm work, the men had abundance of time on their hands. Yet these Red Men are execrable artists, scribbling no better than children do on slates. We certainly have not discovered the secret of what makes people artists in one age and bunglers in another.

* * *

If it be true that Professors Woodberry and Macdowell have resigned their chairs in Columbia University, because the young men are unteachable in literature and art, *fine art*, no wonder that 'comment has been aroused.' In an older University than Columbia, the business of a Professor, at least till recently, was to draw his salary. He did not expect the young barbarians to attend his lectures. They did not flock to those of Mr. Matthew Arnold when he was Professor of Poetry, or to those of Mr. Conington when he was Professor of Latin: for one, I never sat under either Professor, and only circumstances of an uncontrollable nature forced me to attend the lectures of the Greek Professor—he was my tutor, and a stark, stern man. All lectures are a nuisance to a studious person, while a barbarian often 'rags' the lecturer. Have they been ragging Messrs. Woodberry and Macdowell? Apparently, their commercially minded pupils are Philistines rather than barbarians. If we come to think of it, the minority of human beings who really care for Literature and the Fine Arts is so tiny that it is hardly worth

while to endow Professors of these studies, unless these studies are made topics of examination: perhaps they are not, at Columbia University. But there will be no difficulty in securing new Professors to fill the vacant chairs.

* * *

Will the Autobiography of Mr. Herbert Spencer have any effect on the admirers of his philosophical system? Many years ago I saw that autobiography, in the hands of a friend who took the printed sheets on a fishing expedition. He allowed me to glance at the book, which was as full of remarks on the author's health as was the conversation of Hippy, in *Richard Feverel*. One could not suppose that these personal details would be published, yet published they have been, and they cannot produce either pleasure or instruction, or an increase of Mr. Spencer's reputation. He was, certainly, a most unaffected genius; if he did not like anything, he said so with the frankness of Mr. James Payn in his comments on the Greek tragedians. Like Huckleberry Finn, Mr. Spencer 'took no stock in dead persons' or dead languages. He saw nothing in Homer, he did not read Plato, he thought that the Venus of Milo would have been a better thing if the artist had taken his advice. A philosopher of Evolution might have been expected to take an interest in the past, out of which the present has been evolved, but Egypt bored Mr. Spencer as much as Greece or Rome. It appears that Mr. Jowett called him 'the Tupper of philosophy,' and that the phrase somehow came to the philosopher's ears, through I know not what indiscretion. Hating things old, history and the past, Mr. Spencer was curiously interested in savages, for they belong more essentially to the past than do the Greeks and Romans. Yet, as he was not historically minded, he did not treat the evidence for savage customs with the minute and careful criticism which historical study inculcates. His mind was active in evolving generalisations out of facts which were too often fancies, and the conclusions are vitiated by the imperfections of the premisses. In short, he was the most modern of philosophers, and for that reason the most popular. But in a few years the modern is the out-of-date, while the excellent achievements of the past can never be out of date: the Venus of Milo and the epics of Homer are never to be superannuated.

'Igneus est ollis vigor et coelestis origo.'

It is almost inexplicable that a philosopher should be in-

different to, or rather resentful of the past, and yet think the story of his own past worth narrating. Mr. Spencer could not or would not find time to read Carlyle's *Oliver Cromwell*. He said, almost in the words of the *Child's Garden of Verse*, 'the world was so full of a number of things' that he could not give a week to the study of a person who died two centuries ago. Now, Noll's was a character and career of great originality, and of great influence in the evolution of England. If he and his world bored Mr. Spencer, we admire the candour with which that philosopher confessed the fact. There was no humbug, I repeat, about Mr. Spencer. He read part of the *Iliad* in English, and thought but little of it. Mankind for nearly three thousand years has thought nobly of the *Iliad*, so the incalculable odds are that Mr. Spencer was in the wrong about Homer. Even the 'sociological' facts mentioned by the poet are at least as interesting as the manners and customs of the Omumborumbunga tribe. Mr. Spencer preferred the Omumborumbunga. He thought many a thing human *a se alienum*. But how, if he could not interest himself in Cromwell, he expected mankind to interest itself in *him*, seems a hard question. Not that he was uninteresting; he had abundance of moral courage and perseverance, he went his own way with dogged British resolution, in spite of health which he reckoned very bad indeed. He ploughed his lonely furrow through the infinite field of the universe; like Lucretius, he took The Nature of Things for his province, though, unlike Bacon, he certainly did not take in 'all knowledge.' He has, and has had, adorers who worship him as Lucretius worshipped Epicurus. Mr. Grant Allen thought that he *potuit rerum cognoscere causas*. Mr. Saleeby weekly sings the glories of Mr. Spencer's intellectual state. I presume that the truth about Mr. Spencer's position as a philosopher lies somewhere between the class assigned to him by Mr. Jowett and that claimed for him by Mr. Grant Allen. That so popular an author took up anthropology was a lucky thing for that very unpopular study. His ideas on that matter, like most scientific ideas, have been vastly modified; still, he gave the science a life. He has been misjudged, I am sure, on the strength of a phrase in his remarks about the passion of love. He meant that, unhappily for *him*, he never met the right young lady, combining the intellectual powers of Pallas Athênê with the gifts of the golden Aphroditê. He did not mean that, unhappily for *her*, a very clever lady was in love with him! He has been credited with this impossible fatuity, I think, from a misunderstanding of his words.

In fact, his health, in his opinion, made conversation on things of the intellect very bad for him, so he simply could not have lived with 'one unceasing wife,' who unceasingly talked about science. He chose what was, for him, the better part: lonely was the furrow that he ploughed, bright with phosphorescent radiance, through the ocean of the universe.

* * *

The correspondent who sends the following letter need hardly take the trouble to say that he is a Scot! No other nation but mine own could produce a person capable of taking obvious chaff for an accidental misquotation. For qualities like this Charles Lamb loved not our people, while Carlyle loved not Charles Lamb.

'There is a curious slip in your "At the Sign of the Ship" in *Longman's Magazine* for April. It is the quotation from Burns of "wee modest crimson-tippit beastie." Have you not mixed up the first line of "To a Mountain Daisy" with the first line of the verses "To a Mouse"? An Englishman, reading carefully, would rather be puzzled to make out what beastie it could be. But I am a Scotchman and therefore write to you as a brother Scot to point out the *lapsus linguae*.'

* * *

A great deal 'has been done for' Lamb, since Canon Ainger wrote his biography and edited his letters. Old pot-boilers of Lamb's have been dug out of old magazines. It has also been discovered that Elia once sat in the stocks. 'He was very capable of having it happen to him,' as Marlborough said of the Dutch general who was defeated. But could any more recent editor of Lamb, however laudably accurate and industrious, write an essay so Lamb-like as that by Canon Ainger, 'How I Tracked Lamb,' in the May number of the *Cornhill Magazine*? It seems to me the most charming piece of literature which I have read for many a year. It is mentioned here lest any admirer of Lamb may have overlooked it by mischance. One tiny fact I once 'discovered' about Lamb. In 1818, I think, certainly about that year, Scott invited him to Abbotsford. Lamb had been vilified by the *Blackwood* bloods as a cockney and the friend of cockneys, such as Keats and Leigh Hunt (who was not very like Keats). Scott, I suppose, thought

'Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Scoti'

—the North is not so blunt-breasted—and asked Lamb to the Tweed. He did not go; the adventure was too great and perilous for the Londoner. What a pity it is that he did not go! We think of the dream-essay he might have written, as he thought of his 'Dream Children.'

* * *

Some unknown benefactor, whom I can only thank in this place, has sent me, at the 'Sign of the Ship,' a singular miniature bureau, of the eighteenth century. In place of book-shelves behind the glass doors of the upper portion, the recess contains a small idol, of I know not what religion or race. It is a pretty and ingenious *objet d'art*, and the pious donor has my best thanks. This is better than volumes of original English verse, which mild Hindoos have taken to sending. Our civilisation corrupts whatever it touches!

ANDREW LANG.

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